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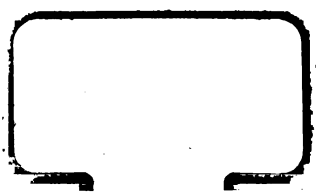

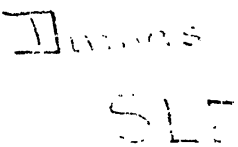

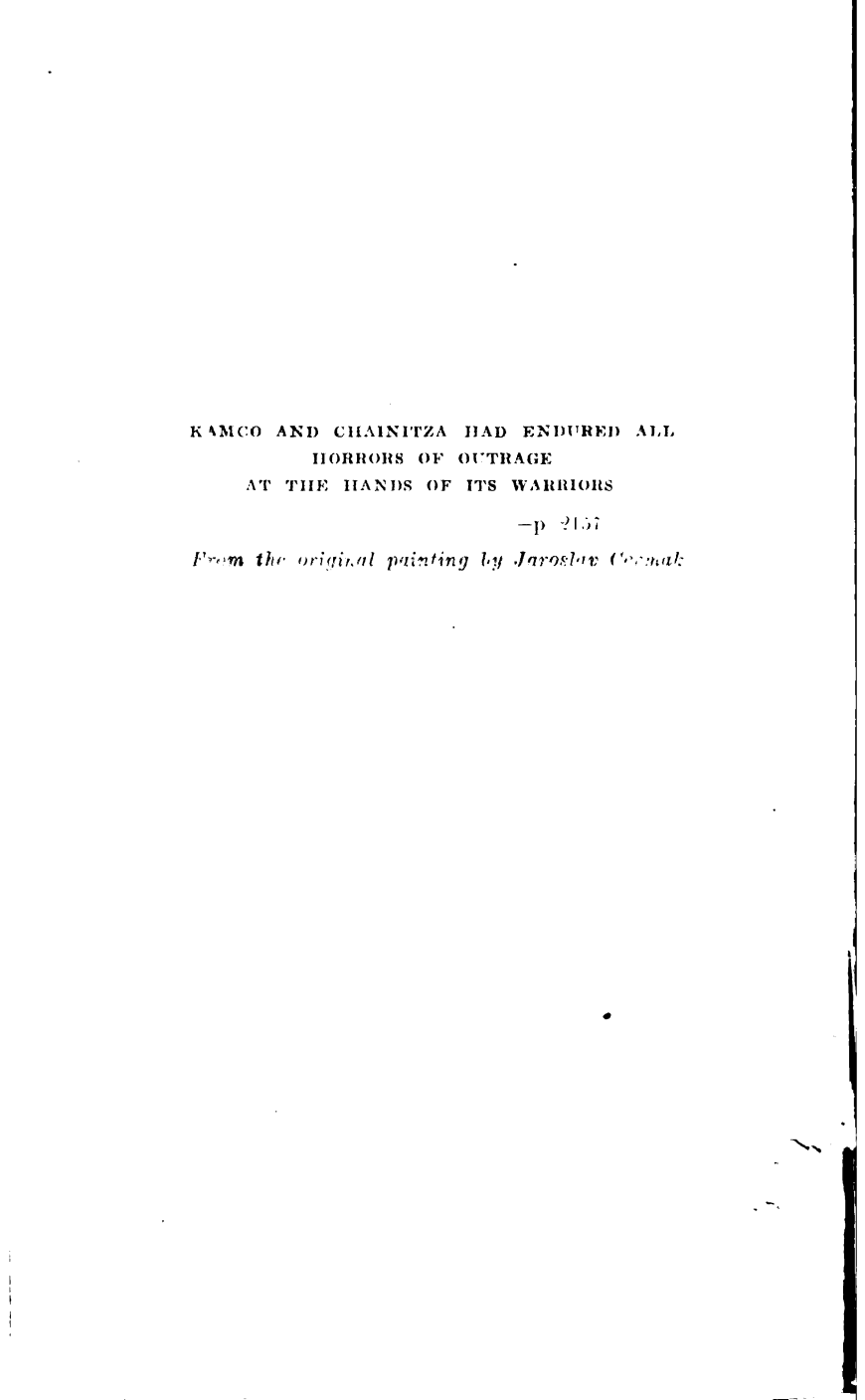

KAMCO AND CHAINITZA HAD ENDURED ALL
HORRORS OF OUTRAGE
AT THE HANDS OF ITS WARRIORS

—p 215

From the original painting by Jaroslav Cermak

ALI PACHA
COUNTESS OF SAINT GERAN
MURAT

VOLUME VII

ILLUSTRATED

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ALI PACHA

CHAPTER I

THE beginning of the nineteenth century was a time of audacious enterprises and strange vicissitudes of fortune. Whilst Western Europe in turn submitted and struggled against a sub-lieutenant who made himself an emperor, who at his pleasure made kings and destroyed kingdoms, the ancient eastern part of the Continent, like mummies which preserve but the semblance of life, was gradually tumbling to pieces, and getting parcelled out amongst bold adventurers who skirmished over its ruins. Without mentioning local revolts which produced only short-lived struggles and trifling changes of administration, such as that of Djezzar Pacha, who refused to pay tribute because he thought himself impregnable in his citadel of Saint-Jean-d'Acre, or that of Passevend-Oglou Pacha, who planted himself on the walls of Widdin as defender of the janissaries against the institution of the regular militia decreed by Sultan Selim at Stamboul, there were wider spread rebellions which attacked the

constitution of the Turkish Empire and diminished its extent; amongst them that of Czerni-Georges, which raised Servia to the position of a free state; of Mahomet Ali, who made his pachalik of Egypt into a kingdom; and finally that of the man whose history we are about to narrate, Ali Tepeleni, Pacha of Janina, whose long resistance to the suzerain power preceded and brought about the regeneration of Greece.

Ali's own will counted for nothing in this important movement. He foresaw it, but without ever seeking to aid it, and was powerless to arrest it. He was not one of those men who place their lives and services at the disposal of any cause indiscriminately; and his sole aim was to acquire and increase a power of which he was both the guiding influence and the end and object. His nature contained the seeds of every human passion, and he devoted all his long life to their development and gratification. This explains his whole temperament; his actions were merely the natural outcome of his character confronted with circumstances. Few men have understood themselves better or been on better terms with the orbit of their existence, and as the personality of an individual is all the more striking in proportion as it reflects the manners and ideas of the time and country in which he has lived, so the figure of Ali Pacha stands out, if not one of the

most brilliant, at least one of the most singular in contemporary history.

From the middle of the eighteenth century Turkey had been a prey to the political gangrene of which she is vainly trying to cure herself to-day, and which, before long, will dismember her in the sight of all Europe. Anarchy and disorder reigned from one end of the empire to the other. The Osmanli race, bred on conquest alone, proved good for nothing when conquest failed. It naturally therefore came to pass when Sobieski, who saved Christianity under the walls of Vienna, as before his time Charles Martel had saved it on the plains of Poitiers, had set bounds to the wave of Mussulman westward invasion, and definitely fixed a limit which it should not pass, that the Osmanli warlike instincts recoiled upon themselves. The haughty descendants of Ortogrul, who considered themselves born to command, seeing victory forsake them, fell back upon tyranny. Vainly did reason expostulate that oppression could not long be exercised by hands which had lost their strength, and that peace imposed new and different labours on those who no longer triumphed in war; they would listen to nothing; and, as fatalistic when condemned to a state of peace as when they marched forth conquering and to conquer, they cowered down in magnificent listlessness, leaving the whole burden of

their support on conquered peoples. Like ignorant farmers, who exhaust fertile fields by forcing crops, they rapidly ruined their vast and rich empire by exorbitant exactions. Inexorable conquerors and insatiable masters, with one hand they flogged their slaves and with the other plundered them. Nothing was superior to their insolence, nothing on a level with their greed. They were never glutted, and never relaxed their extortions. But in proportion as their needs increased on the one hand, so did their resources diminish on the other. Their oppressed subjects soon found that they must escape at any cost from oppressors whom they could neither appease nor satisfy. Each population took the steps best suited to its position and character; some chose inertia, others violence. The inhabitants of the plains, powerless and shelterless, bent like reeds before the storm and evaded the shock against which they were unable to stand. The mountaineers planted themselves like rocks in a torrent, and dammed its course with all their might. On both sides arose a determined resistance, different in method, similar in result. In the case of the peasants labour came to a stand-still; in that of the hill folk open war broke out. The grasping exactions of the tyrant dominant body produced nothing from waste lands and armed mountaineers; destitution and revolt were equally beyond their power to cope

with; and all that was left for tyranny to govern was a desert enclosed by a wall.

But, all the same, the wants of a magnificent sultan, descendant of the Prophet and distributor of crowns, must be supplied; and to do this, the Sublime Porte needed money. Unconsciously imitating the Roman Senate, the Turkish Divan put up the empire for sale by public auction. All employments were sold to the highest bidder; pachas, beys, cadis, ministers of every rank, and clerks of every class had to buy their posts from their sovereign and get the money back out of his subjects. They spent their money in the capital, and recuperated themselves in the provinces. And as there was no other law than their master's pleasure, so there was no other guarantee than his caprice. They had therefore to set quickly to work; the post might be lost before its cost had been recovered. Thus all the science of administration resolved itself into plundering as much and as quickly as possible. To this end, the delegate of imperial power delegated in his turn, on similar conditions, other agents to seize for him and for themselves all they could lay their hands on; so that the inhabitants of the empire might be divided into three classes—those who were striving to seize everything; those who were trying to save a little; and those who, having nothing and hoping for nothing, took no interest in affairs at all.

Albania was one of the most difficult provinces to manage. Its inhabitants were poor, brave, and the nature of the country was mountainous and inaccessible. The pachas had great difficulty in collecting tribute, because the people were given to fighting for their bread. Whether Mahomedans or Christians, the Albanians were above all soldiers. Descended on the one side from the unconquerable Scythians, on the other from the ancient Macedonians, not long since masters of the world; crossed with Norman adventurers brought eastwards by the great movement of the Crusades; they felt the blood of warriors flow in their veins, and that war was their element. Sometimes at feud with one another, canton against canton, village against village, often even house against house; sometimes rebelling against the government of their sanjaks; sometimes in league with these against the sultan; they never rested from combat except in an armed peace. Each tribe had its military organisation, each family its fortified stronghold, each man his gun on his shoulder. When they had nothing better to do, they tilled their fields, or mowed their neighbours', carrying off, it should be noted, the crop; or pastured their flocks, watching the opportunity to trespass over pasture limits. This was the normal and regular life of the population of Epirus, Thesprotia, Thes-

saly, and Upper Albania. Lower Albania, less strong, was also less active and bold; and there, as in many other parts of Turkey, the dalesman was often the prey of the mountaineer. It was in the mountain districts where were preserved the recollections of Scander Beg, and where the manners of ancient Laconia prevailed; the deeds of the brave soldier were sung on the lyre, and the skilful robber quoted as an example to the children by the father of the family. Village feasts were held on the booty taken from strangers; and the favourite dish was always a stolen sheep. Every man was esteemed in proportion to his skill and courage, and a man's chances of making a good match were greatly enhanced when he acquired the reputation of being an agile mountaineer and a good bandit.

The Albanians proudly called this anarchy liberty, and religiously guarded a state of disorder bequeathed by their ancestors, which always assured the first place to the most valiant.

It was amidst men and manners such as these that Ali Tepeleni was born. He boasted that he belonged to the conquering race, and that he descended from an ancient Anatolian family which had crossed into Albania with the troops of Bajazet Ilderim. But it is made certain by the learned researches of M. de Pouqueville that he sprang from a native stock, and not an Asiatic one, as he

pretended. His ancestors were Christian Skipetars, who became Mussulmans after the Turkish invasion, and his ancestry certainly cannot be traced farther back than the end of the sixteenth century.

Mouktar Tepeleni, his grandfather, perished in the Turkish expedition against Corfu, in 1716. Marshal Schullemburg, who defended the island, having repulsed the enemy with loss, took Mouktar prisoner on Mount San Salvador, where he was in charge of a signalling party, and with a barbarity worthy of his adversaries, hung him without trial. It must be admitted that the memory of this murder must have had the effect of rendering Ali badly disposed towards Christians.

Mouktar left three sons, two of whom, Salik and Mahomet, were born of the same mother, a lawful wife, but the mother of the youngest, Veli, was a slave. His origin was no legal bar to his succeeding like his brothers. The family was one of the richest in the town of Tepelen, whose name it bore; it enjoyed an income of six thousand piastres, equal to twenty thousand francs. This was a large fortune in a poor country, where all commodities were cheap. But the Tepeleni family, holding the rank of beys, had to maintain a state like that of the great financiers of feudal Europe. They had to keep up a large stud of horses, with a great retinue of servants and men-at-arms, and consequently to incur

heavy expenses; thus they constantly found their revenue inadequate. The most natural means of raising it which occurred to them was to diminish the number of those who shared it; therefore the two elder brothers, sons of the wife, combined against Veli, the son of the slave, and drove him out of the house. The latter, forced to leave home, bore his fate like a brave man, and determined to levy exactions on others to compensate him for the losses incurred through his brothers. He became a freebooter, patrolling highroads and lanes, with his gun on his shoulder and his yataghan in his belt, attacking, holding for ransom, or plundering all whom he encountered.

After some years of this profitable business, he found himself a wealthy man and chief of a warlike band. Judging that the moment for vengeance had arrived, he marched for Tepelen, which he reached unsuspected, crossed the river Vojutza, the ancient Aous, penetrated the streets unresisted, and presented himself before the paternal house, in which his brothers, forewarned, had barricaded themselves. He at once besieged them, soon forced the gates, and pursued them to a tent, in which they took a final refuge. He surrounded this tent, waited till they were inside it, and then set fire to the four corners. "See," said he to those around him, "they cannot accuse me of vindictive repri-

sals; my brothers drove me out of doors, and I retaliate by keeping them at home for ever."

In a few moments he was his father's sole heir and master of Tepelen. Arrived at the summit of his ambition, he gave up freebooting, and established himself in the town, of which he became chief aga. He had already a son by a slave, who soon presented him with another son, and afterwards with a daughter, so that he had no reason to fear dying without an heir. But finding himself rich enough to maintain more wives and bring up many children, he desired to increase his credit by allying himself to some great family of the country. He therefore solicited and obtained the hand of Kamco, daughter of a bey of Conitza. This marriage attached him by the ties of relationship to the principal families of the province, among others to Kourd Pacha, Vizier of Berat, who was descended from the illustrious race of Scander Beg. After a few years, Veli had by his new wife a son named Ali, the subject of this history, and a daughter named Chaïnitza.

In spite of his intentions to reform, Veli could not entirely give up his old habits. Although his fortune placed him altogether above small gains and losses, he continued to amuse himself by raiding from time to time sheep, goats, and other perquisites, probably to keep his hand in. This innocent

exercise of his taste was not to the fancy of his neighbours, and brawls and fights recommenced in fine style. Fortune did not always favour him, and the old mountaineer lost in the town part of what he had made on the hills. Vexations soured his temper and injured his health. Notwithstanding the injunctions of Mahomet, he sought consolation in wine, which soon closed his career. He died in 1754.

CHAPTER II

ALI thus at thirteen years of age was free to indulge in the impetuosity of his character. From his early youth he had manifested a mettle and activity rare in young Turks, haughty by nature and self-restrained by education. Scarcely out of the nursery, he spent his time in climbing mountains, wandering through forests, scaling precipices, rolling in snow, inhaling the wind, defying the tempests, breathing out his nervous energy through every pore. Possibly he learnt in the midst of every kind of danger to brave everything and subdue everything; possibly in sympathy with the majesty of nature he felt aroused in him a need of personal grandeur which nothing could satiate. In vain his father sought to calm his savage temper and restrain his vagabond spirit; nothing was of any use. As obstinate as intractable, he set at defiance all efforts and all precautions. If they shut him up, he broke the door or jumped out of the window; if they threatened him, he pretended to comply, conquered by fear, and promised everything that was required, but only to break his word the

first opportunity. He had a tutor specially attached to his person and charged to supervise all his actions. He constantly deluded him by fresh tricks, and when he thought himself free from the consequences, he maltreated him with gross violence. It was only in his youth, after his father's death, that he became more manageable; he even consented to learn to read, to please his mother, whose idol he was, and to whom in return he gave all his affection.

If Kamco had so strong a liking for Ali, it was because she found in him, not only her blood, but also her character. During the lifetime of her husband, whom she feared, she seemed only an ordinary woman; but as soon as his eyes were closed, she gave free scope to the violent passions which agitated her bosom. Ambitious, bold, vindictive, she assiduously cultivated the germs of ambition, hardihood, and vengeance which already strongly showed themselves in the young Ali. "My son," she was never tired of telling him, "he who cannot defend his patrimony richly deserves to lose it. Remember that the property of others is only theirs so long as they are strong enough to keep it, and that when you find yourself strong enough to take it from them, it is yours. Success justifies everything, and everything is permissible to him who has the power to do it."

Ali, when he reached the zenith of his greatness,

used to declare that his success was entirely his mother's work. "I owe everything to my mother," he said one day to the French Consul; "for my father, when he died, left me nothing but a den of wild beasts and a few fields. My imagination, inflamed by the counsels of her who has given me life twice over, since she has made me both a man and a vizier, revealed to me the secret of my destiny. Thenceforward I saw nothing in Tepelen but the natal air from which I was to spring on the prey which I devoured mentally. I dreamt of nothing else but power, treasures, palaces, in short what time has realised and still promises; for the point I have now reached is not the limit of my hopes."

Kamco did not confine herself to words; she employed every means to increase the fortune of her beloved son and to make him a power. Her first care was to poison the children of Veli's favourite slave, who had died before him. Then, at ease about the interior of her family, she directed her attention to the exterior. Renouncing all the habits of her sex, she abandoned the veil and the distaff, and took up arms, under pretext of maintaining the rights of her children. She collected round her her husband's old partisans, whom she attached to her service, some by presents, others by various favours, and she gradually enlisted all the lawless and adventurous men in Toscaria. With their aid, she made

herself all powerful in Tepelen, and inflicted the most rigorous persecutions on such as remained hostile to her.

But the inhabitants of the two adjacent villages, Kormovo and Kardiki, fearing lest this terrible woman, aided by her son, now grown into a man, should strike a blow against their independence, made a secret alliance against her, with the object of putting her out of the way the first convenient opportunity. Learning one day that Ali had started on a distant expedition with his best soldiers, they surprised Tepelen under cover of night, and carried off Kamco and her daughter Chaïnitza captives to Kardiki. It was proposed to put them to death, and sufficient evidence to justify their execution was not wanting; but their beauty saved their lives; their captors preferred to revenge themselves by licentiousness rather than by murder. Shut up all day in prison, they only emerged at night to pass into the arms of the men who had won them by lot the previous morning. This state of things lasted for a month, at the end of which a Greek of Argyro-Castron, named G. Malicovo, moved by compassion for their horrible fate, ransomed them for twenty thousand piastres, and took them back to Tepelen.

Ali had just returned. He was accosted by his mother and sister, pale with fatigue, shame, and rage. They told him what had taken place, with

cries and tears, and Kamco added, fixing her distracted eyes upon him, "My son! my son! my soul will enjoy no peace till Kormovo and Kardiki, destroyed by thy scimitar, will no longer exist to bear witness to my dishonour."

Ali, in whom this sight and this story had aroused sanguinary passions, promised a vengeance proportioned to the outrage, and worked with all his might to place himself in a position to keep his word. A worthy son of his father, he had commenced life in the fashion of the heroes of ancient Greece, stealing sheep and goats, and from the age of fourteen years he had acquired an equal reputation to that earned by the son of Jupiter and Maia. When he grew to manhood, he extended his operations. At the time of which we are speaking, he had long practised open pillage. His plundering expeditions, added to his mother's savings, who since her return from Kardiki had altogether withdrawn from public life, and devoted herself to household duties, enabled him to collect a considerable force for an expedition against Kormovo, one of the two towns he had sworn to destroy. He marched against it at the head of his banditti, but found himself vigorously opposed, lost part of his force, and was obliged to save himself and the rest by flight. He did not stop till he reached Tepelen, where he had a warm reception from Kamco, whose thirst for vengeance

had been disappointed by his defeat. "Go!" said she, "go, coward! go spin with the women in the harem! The distaff is a better weapon for you than the scimitar!" The young man answered not a word, but, deeply wounded by these reproaches, retired to hide his humiliation in the bosom of his old friend the mountain. The popular legend, always thirsting for the marvellous in the adventures of heroes, has it that he found in the ruins of a church a treasure which enabled him to reconstitute his party. But he himself has contradicted this story, stating that it was by the ordinary methods of rapine and plunder that he replenished his finances. He selected from his old band of brigands thirty palikars, and entered, as their bouloubachi, or leader of the group, into the service of the Pacha of Negropont. But he soon tired of the methodical life he was obliged to lead, and passed into Thessaly, where, following the example of his father Veli, he employed his time in brigandage on the highways. Thence he raided the Pindus chain of mountains, plundered a great number of villages, and returned to Tepelen, richer and consequently more esteemed than ever.

He employed his fortune and influence in collecting a formidable guerilla force, and resumed his plundering operations. Kurd Pacha soon found himself compelled, by the universal outcry of the

province, to take active measures against this young brigand. He sent against him a division of troops, which defeated him and brought him prisoner with his men to Berat, the capital of Central Albania and residence of the governor. The country flattered itself that at length it was freed from its scourge. The whole body of bandits was condemned to death; but Ali was not the man to surrender his life so easily. Whilst they were hanging his comrades, he threw himself at the feet of the pacha and begged for mercy in the name of his parents, excusing himself on account of his youth, and promising a lasting reform. The pacha, seeing at his feet a comely youth, with fair hair and blue eyes, a persuasive voice, and eloquent tongue, and in whose veins flowed the same blood as his own, was moved with pity and pardoned him. Ali got off with a mild captivity in the palace of his powerful relative, who heaped benefits upon him, and did all he could to lead him into the paths of probity. He appeared amenable to these good influences, and bitterly to repent his past errors. After some years, believing in his reformation, and moved by the prayers of Kamco, who incessantly implored the restitution of her dear son, the generous pacha restored him his liberty, only giving him to understand that he had no more mercy to expect if he again disturbed the public peace. Ali taking the

threat seriously, did not run the risk of braving it, and, on the contrary, did all he could to conciliate the man whose anger he dared not kindle. Not only did he keep the promise he had made to live quietly, but by his good conduct he caused his former escapades to be forgotten, putting under obligation all his neighbours, and attaching to himself, through the services he rendered them, a great number of friendly disposed persons. In this manner he soon assumed a distinguished and honourable rank among the beys of the country, and being of marriageable age, he sought and formed an alliance with the daughter of Capelan Tigre, Pacha of Delvino, who resided at Argyro-Castron. This union, happy on both sides, gave him, with one of the most accomplished women in Epirus, a high position and great influence.

It seemed as if this marriage were destined to wean Ali for ever from his former turbulent habits and wild adventures. But the family into which he had married afforded violent contrasts and equal elements of good and mischief. If Emineh, his wife, was a model of virtue, his father-in-law, Capelan, was a composition of every vice—selfish, ambitious, turbulent, fierce. Confident in his courage, and further emboldened by his remoteness from the capital, the Pacha of Delvino gloried in setting law and authority at defiance.

Ali's disposition was too much like that of his father-in-law to prevent him from taking his measure very quickly. He soon got on good terms with him, and entered into his schemes, waiting for an opportunity to denounce him and become his successor. For this opportunity he had not long to wait.

Capelan's object in giving his daughter to Tepeleni was to enlist him among the beys of the province to gain independence, the ruling passion of viziers. The cunning young man pretended to enter into the views of his father-in-law, and did all he could to urge him into the path of rebellion.

An adventurer named Stephano Piccolo, an emissary of Russia, had just raised in Albania the standard of the Cross and called to arms all the Christians of the Acroceraunian Mountains. The Divan sent orders to all the pachas of Northern Turkey in Europe to instantly march against the insurgents and quell the rising in blood.

Instead of obeying the orders of the Divan and joining Kurd Pacha, who had summoned him, Capelan, at the instigation of his son-in-law, did all he could to embarrass the movement of the imperial troops, and without openly making common cause with the insurgents, he rendered them substantial aid in their resistance. They were, notwithstand-

ing, conquered and dispersed; and their chief, Stephano Piccolo, had to take refuge in the unexplored caves of Montenegro.

When the struggle was over, Capelan, as Ali had foreseen, was summoned to give an account of his conduct before the roumeli-valicy, supreme judge over Turkey in Europe. He was not only accused of the gravest offences, but proofs of them were forwarded to the Divan by the very man who had instigated them. There could be no doubt as to the result of the inquiry; therefore, the pacha, who had no suspicions of his son-in-law's duplicity, determined not to leave his pachalik. That was not in accordance with the plans of Ali, who wished to succeed to both the government and the wealth of his father-in-law. He accordingly made the most plausible remonstrances against the inefficacy and danger of such a resistance. To refuse to plead was tantamount to a confession of guilt, and was certain to bring on his head a storm against which he was powerless to cope, whilst if he obeyed the orders of the roumeli-valicy he would find it easy to excuse himself. To give more effect to his perfidious advice, Ali further employed the innocent Emineh, who was easily alarmed on her father's account. Overcome by the reasoning of his son-in-law and the tears of his daughter, the unfortunate pacha consented to go to Monastir, where he had

been summoned to appear, and where he was immediately arrested and beheaded.

Ali's schemes had succeeded, but both his ambition and his cupidity were frustrated. Ali, Bey of Argyro-Castron, who had throughout shown himself devoted to the sultan, was nominated Pacha of Delvino in place of Capelan. He sequestered all the property of his predecessor, as confiscated to the sultan, and thus deprived Ali Tepeleni of all the fruits of his crime.

This disappointment kindled the wrath of the ambitious Ali. He swore vengeance for the spoliation of which he considered himself the victim. But the moment was not favourable for putting his projects in train. The murder of Capelan, which its perpetrator intended for a mere crime, proved a huge blunder. The numerous enemies of Tepeleni, silent under the administration of the late pacha, whose resentment they had cause to fear, soon made common cause under the new one, for whose support they had hopes. Ali saw the danger, sought and found the means to obviate it. He succeeded in making a match between Ali of Argyro-Castron, who was unmarried, and Chaïnitza, his own sister. This alliance secured to him the government of Tigre, which he held under Capelan. But that was not sufficient. He must put himself in a state of security against the dangers he had lately experi-

enced, and establish himself on a firm footing against possible accidents. He soon formed a plan, which he himself described to the French Consul in the following words:—

"Years were elapsing," said he, "and brought no important change in my position. I was an important partisan, it is true, and strongly supported, but I held no title or Government employment of my own. I recognised the necessity of establishing myself firmly in my birthplace. I had devoted friends, and formidable foes, bent on my destruction, whom I must put out of the way, for my own safety. I set about a plan for destroying them at one blow, and ended by devising one with which I ought to have commenced my career. Had I done so, I should have saved much time and pains.

"I was in the habit of going every day, after hunting, for a siesta in a neighbouring wood. A confidential servant of mine suggested to my enemies the idea of surprising me and assassinating me there. I myself supplied the plan of the conspiracy, which was adopted. On the day agreed upon, I preceded my adversaries to the place where I was accustomed to repose, and caused a goat to be pinioned and muzzled, and fastened under the tree, covered with my cape; I then returned home by a roundabout path. Soon after I had left, the conspirators arrived, and fired a volley at the goat.

They ran up to make certain of my death, but were interrupted by a piquet of my men, who unexpectedly emerged from a copse where I had posted them, and they were obliged to return to Tepelen, which they entered, riotous with joy, crying 'Ali Bey is dead, now we are free!' This news reached my harem, and I heard the cries of my mother and my wife mingled with the shouts of my enemies. I allowed the commotion to run its course and reach its height, so as to indicate which were my friends and which my foes. But when the former were at the depth of their distress and the latter at the height of their joy, and, exulting in their supposed victory, had drowned their prudence and their courage in floods of wine, then, strong in the justice of my cause, I appeared upon the scene. Now was the time for my friends to triumph and for my foes to tremble. I set to work at the head of my partisans, and before sunrise had exterminated the last of my enemies. I distributed their lands, their houses, and their goods amongst my followers, and from that moment I could call the town of Tepelen my own."

A less ambitious man might perhaps have remained satisfied with such a result. But Ali did not look upon the suzerainty of a canton as a final object, but only as a means to an end; and he had not made himself master of Tepelen to limit him-

self to a petty state, but to employ it as a base of operations.

He had allied himself to Ali of Argyro-Castron to get rid of his enemies; once free from them, he began to plot against his supplanter. He forgot neither his vindictive projects nor his ambitious schemes. As prudent in execution as bold in design, he took good care not to openly attack a man stronger than himself, and gained by stratagem what he could not obtain by violence. The honest and straightforward character of his brother-in-law afforded an easy success to his perfidy. He began by endeavouring to suborn his sister Chaïnitza, and several times proposed to her to poison her husband; but she, who dearly loved the pacha, who was a kind husband and to whom she had borne two children, repulsed his suggestions with horror, and threatened, if he persisted, to denounce him. Ali, fearing the consequences if she carried out her threat, begged forgiveness for his wicked plans, pretended deep repentance, and spoke of his brother-in-law in terms of the warmest affection. His acting was so consummate that even Chaïnitza, who well knew her brother's subtle character, was deceived by it. When he saw that she was his dupe, knowing that he had nothing more either to fear or to hope for from that side, he directed his attention to another.

The pacha had a brother named Soliman, whose character nearly resembled that of Tepeleni. The latter, after having for some time quietly studied him, thought he discerned in him the man he wanted; he tempted him to kill the pacha, offering him, as the price of this crime, his whole inheritance and the hand of Chaïnitza, only reserving for himself the long coveted sanjak. Soliman accepted the proposals, and the fratricidal bargain was concluded. The two conspirators, sole masters of the secret, the horrible nature of which guaranteed their mutual fidelity, and having free access to the person of their victim, could not fail in their object.

One day, when they were both received by the pacha in private audience, Soliman, taking advantage of a moment when he was unobserved, drew a pistol from his belt and blew out his brother's brains. Chaïnitza ran at the sound, and saw her husband lying dead between her brother and her brother-in-law. Her cries for help were stopped by threats of death if she moved or uttered a sound. As she lay, fainting with grief and terror, Ali made a sign to Soliman, who covered her with his cloak, and declared her his wife. Ali pronounced the marriage concluded, and retired for it to be consummated. Thus was celebrated this frightful wedding, in the scene of an awful crime, beside the corpse of

a man who a moment before had been the husband of the bride and the brother of the bridegroom.

The assassins published the death of the pacha, attributing it, as is usual in Turkey, to a fit of cerebral apoplexy. But the truth soon leaked out from the lying shrouds in which it had been wrapped. Reports even exceeded the truth, and public opinion implicated Chaïnitza in a crime of which she had been but the witness. Appearances certainly justified these suspicions. The young wife had soon consoled herself in the arms of her second husband for the loss of the first, and her son by him presently died suddenly, thus leaving Soliman in lawful and peaceful possession of all his brother's wealth. As for the little girl, as she had no rights and could hurt no one, her life was spared, and she was eventually married to a bey of Cleïsoura, destined in the sequel to cut a tragic figure in the history of the Tepeleni family.

But Ali was once more deprived of the fruit of his bloody schemes. Notwithstanding all his intrigues, the sanjak of Delvino was conferred, not upon him, but upon a bey of one of the first families of Zapouria. But, far from being discouraged, he recommenced with new boldness and still greater confidence the work of his elevation, so often begun and so often interrupted. He took advantage of his increasing influence to ingratiate himself with the

new pacha, and was so successful in insinuating himself into his confidence, that he was received into the palace and treated like the pacha's son. There he acquired complete knowledge of the details of the pachalik and the affairs of the pacha, preparing himself to govern the one when he had got rid of the other.

The sanjak of Delvino was bounded from Venetian territory by the district of Buthrotum. Selim, a better neighbour and an abler politician than his predecessors, sought to renew and preserve friendly commercial relations with the purveyors of the Magnificent Republic. This wise conduct, equally advantageous for both the bordering provinces, instead of gaining for the pacha the praise and favours which he deserved, rendered him suspected at a court whose sole political idea was hatred of the name of Christian, and whose sole means of government was terror. Ali immediately perceived the pacha's error, and the advantage which he himself could derive from it. Selim, as one of his commercial transactions with the Venetians, had sold them, for a number of years, the right of felling timber in a forest near Lake Peloda. Ali immediately took advantage of this to denounce the pacha as guilty of having alienated the territory of the Sublime Porte, and of a desire to deliver to the infidels all the province of Delvino. Masking his

ambitious designs under the veil of religion and patriotism, he lamented, in his denunciatory report, the necessity under which he found himself, as a loyal subject and faithful Mussulman, of accusing a man who had been his benefactor, and thus at the same time gained the benefit of crime and the credit of virtue.

Under the gloomy despotism of the Turks, a man in any position of responsibility is condemned almost as soon as accused; and if he is not strong enough to inspire terror, his ruin is certain. Ali received at Tepelen, where he had retired to more conveniently weave his perfidious plots, an order to get rid of the pacha. At the receipt of the firman of execution he leaped with joy, and flew to Delvino to seize the prey which was abandoned to him.

The noble Selim, little suspecting that his protégé had become his accuser and was preparing to become his executioner, received him with more tenderness than ever, and lodged him, as heretofore, in his palace. Under the shadow of this hospitable roof, Ali skilfully prepared the consummation of the crime which was for ever to draw him out of obscurity. He went every morning to pay his court to the pacha, whose confidence he doubted; then, one day, feigning illness, he sent excuses for inability to pay his respects to a man whom he was accustomed to regard as his father, and begged him to

come for a moment into his apartment. The invitation being accepted, he concealed assassins in one of the cupboards without shelves, so common in the East, which contain by day the mattresses spread by night on the floor for the slaves to sleep upon. At the hour fixed, the old man arrived. Ali rose from his sofa with a depressed air, met him, kissed the hem of his robe, and, after seating him in his place, himself offered him a pipe and coffee, which were accepted. But instead of putting the cup in the hand stretched to receive it, he let it fall on the floor, where it broke into a thousand pieces. This was the signal. The assassins sprang from their retreat and darted upon Selim, who fell, exclaiming, like Cæsar, "And it is thou, my son, who takest my life!"

At the sound of the tumult which followed the assassination, Selim's bodyguard, running up, found Ali erect, covered with blood, surrounded by assassins, holding in his hand the firman displayed, and crying with a menacing voice, "I have killed the traitor Selim by the order of our glorious sultan; here is his imperial command." At these words, and the sight of the fatal diploma, all prostrated themselves terror-stricken. Ali, after ordering the decapitation of Selim, whose head he seized as a trophy, ordered the cadi, the beys, and the Greek archons to meet at the palace, to prepare the official

account of the execution of the sentence. They assembled, trembling; the sacred hymn of the Fatahat was sung, and the murder declared legal, in the name of the merciful and compassionate God, Lord of the world.

When they had sealed up the effects of the victim, the murderer left the palace, taking with him, as a hostage, Mustapha, son of Selim, destined to be even more unfortunate than his father.

A few days afterwards, the Divan awarded to Ali Tepeleni, as a reward for his zeal for the State and religion, the sanjak of Thessaly, with the title of Dervendgi-pacha, or Provost Marshal of the roads. This latter dignity was conferred on the condition of his levying a body of four thousand men to clear the valley of the Peneus of a multitude of Christian chiefs who exercised more power than the officers of the Grand Seigneur. The new pacha took advantage of this to enlist a numerous body of Albanians ready for any enterprise, and completely devoted to him. With two important commands, and with this strong force at his back, he repaired to Trikala, the seat of his government, where he speedily acquired great influence.

His first act of authority was to exterminate the bands of Armatolis, or Christian militia, which infested the plain. He laid violent hands on all whom he caught, and drove the rest back into their moun-

tains, splitting them up into small bands whom he could deal with at his pleasure. At the same time he sent a few heads to Constantinople, to amuse the sultan and the mob, and some money to the ministers to gain their support. "For," said he, "water sleeps, but envy never does." These steps were prudent, and whilst his credit increased at court, order was re-established from the defiles of the Perrebia of Pindus to the vale of Tempe and to the pass of Thermopylæ.

These exploits of the provost-marshal, amplified by Oriental exaggeration, justified the ideas which were entertained of the capacity of Ali Pacha. Impatient of celebrity, he took good care himself to spread his fame, relating his prowess to all comers, making presents to the sultan's officers who came into his government, and showing travellers his palace courtyard festooned with decapitated heads. But what chiefly tended to consolidate his power was the treasure which he ceaselessly amassed by every means. He never struck for the mere pleasure of striking, and the numerous victims of his proscriptions only perished to enrich him. His death sentences always fell on beys and wealthy persons whom he wished to plunder. In his eyes the axe was but an instrument of fortune, and the executioner a tax-gatherer.

CHAPTER III

HAVING governed Thessaly in this manner during several years, Ali found himself in a position to acquire the province of Janina, the possession of which, by making him master of Epirus, would enable him to crush all his enemies and to reign supreme over the three divisions of Albania.

But before he could succeed in this, it was necessary to dispose of the pacha already in possession. Fortunately for Ali, the latter was a weak and indolent man, quite incapable of struggling against so formidable a rival; and his enemy speedily conceived and put into execution a plan intended to bring about the fulfilment of his desires. He came to terms with the same Armatolians whom he had formerly treated so harshly, and let them loose, provided with arms and ammunition, on the country which he wished to obtain. Soon the whole region echoed with stories of devastation and pillage. The pacha, unable to repel the incursions of these mountaineers, employed the few troops he had in oppressing the inhabitants of the plains, who, groaning under both extortion and

rapine, vainly filled the air with their despairing cries. Ali hoped that the Divan, which usually judged only after the event, seeing that Epirus lay desolate, while Thessaly flourished under his own administration, would, before long, entrust himself with the government of both provinces, when a family incident occurred, which for a time diverted the course of his political manœuvres.

For a long time his mother Kamco had suffered from an internal cancer, the result of a life of depravity. Feeling that her end drew near, she despatched messenger after messenger, summoning her son to her bedside. He started, but arrived too late, and found only his sister Chaïnitza mourning over the body of their mother, who had expired in her arms an hour previously. Breathing unutterable rage and pronouncing horrible imprecations against Heaven, Kamco had commanded her children, under pain of her dying curse, to carry out her last wishes faithfully. After having long given way to their grief, Ali and Chaïnitza read together the document which contained these commands. It ordained some special assassinations, mentioned sundry villages which, some day, were to be given to the flames, but ordered them most especially, as soon as possible, to exterminate the inhabitants of Kormovo and Kardiki, from whom she had endured the last horrors of slavery.

Then, after advising her children to remain united, to enrich their soldiers, and to count as nothing people who were useless to them, Kamco ended by commanding them to send in her name a pilgrim to Mecca, who should deposit an offering on the tomb of the Prophet for the repose of her soul. Having perused these last injunctions, Ali and Chaïnitza joined hands, and over the inanimate remains of their departed mother swore to accomplish her dying behests.

The pilgrimage came first under consideration. Now a pilgrim can only be sent as proxy to Mecca, or offerings be made at the tomb of Medina, at the expense of legitimately acquired property duly sold for the purpose. The brother and sister made a careful examination of the family estates, and after long hunting, thought they had found the correct thing in a small property of about fifteen hundred francs income, inherited from their great-grandfather, founder of the Tepel-Enian dynasty. But further investigations disclosed that even this last resource had been forcibly taken from a Christian, and the idea of a pious pilgrimage and a sacred offering had to be given up. They then agreed to atone for the impossibility of expiation by the grandeur of their vengeance, and swore to pursue without ceasing and to destroy without mercy all enemies of their family.

The best mode of carrying out this terrible and self-given pledge was that Ali should resume his plans of aggrandizement exactly where he had left them. He succeeded in acquiring the pachalik of Janina, which was granted him by the Porte under the title of "arpalik," or conquest. It was an old custom, natural to the warlike habits of the Turks, to bestow the Government provinces or towns affecting to despise the authority of the Grand Seigneur on whomsoever succeeded in controlling them, and Janina occupied this position. It was principally inhabited by Albanians, who had an enthusiastic admiration for anarchy, dignified by them with the name of " Liberty," and who thought themselves independent in proportion to the disturbance they succeeded in making. Each lived retired as if in a mountain castle, and only went out in order to participate in the quarrels of his faction in the forum. As for the pachas, they were relegated to the old castle on the lake, and there was no difficulty in obtaining their recall.

Consequently there was a general outcry at the news of Ali Pacha's nomination, and it was unanimously agreed that a man whose character and power were alike dreaded must not be admitted within the walls of Janina. Ali, not choosing to risk his forces in an open battle with a warlike population, and preferring a slower and safer way

to a short and dangerous one, began by pillaging the villages and farms belonging to his most powerful opponents. His tactics succeeded, and the very persons who had been foremost in vowing hatred to the son of Kamco and who had sworn most loudly that they would die rather than submit to the tyrant, seeing their property daily ravaged, and impending ruin if hostilities continued, applied themselves to procure peace. Messengers were sent secretly to Ali, offering to admit him into Janina if he would undertake to respect the lives and property of his new allies. Ali promised whatever they asked, and entered the town by night. His first proceeding was to appear before the cadi, whom he compelled to register and proclaim his firmans of investiture.

In the same year in which he arrived at this dignity, really the desire and object of Ali's whole life, occurred also the death of the Sultan Abdul Hamid, whose two sons, Mustapha and Mahmoud, were confined in the Old Seraglio. This change of rulers, however, made no difference to Ali; the peaceful Selim, exchanging the prison to which his nephews were now relegated, for the throne of their father, confirmed the Pacha of Janina in the titles, offices, and privileges which had been conferred on him.

Established in his position by this double inves-

titure, Ali applied himself to the definite settlement of his claims. He was now fifty years of age, and was at the height of his intellectual development: experience had been his teacher, and the lesson of no single event had been lost upon him. An uncultivated but just and penetrating mind enabled him to comprehend facts, analyse causes, and anticipate results; and as his heart never interfered with the deductions of his rough intelligence, he had by a sort of logical sequence formulated an inflexible plan of action. This man, wholly ignorant, not only of the ideas of history but also of the great names of Europe, had succeeded in divining, and as a natural consequence of his active and practical character, in also realising Macchiavelli, as is amply shown in the expansion of his greatness and the exercise of his power. Without faith in God, despising men, loving and thinking only of himself, distrusting all around him, audacious in design, immovable in resolution, inexorable in execution, merciless in vengeance, by turns insolent, humble, violent, or supple according to circumstances, always and entirely logical in his egotism, he is Cesar Borgia reborn as a Mussulman; he is the incarnate ideal of Florentine policy, the Italian prince converted into a satrap.

Age had as yet in no way impaired Ali's strength

and activity, and nothing prevented his profiting by the advantages of his position. Already possessing great riches, which every day saw increasing under his management, he maintained a large body of warlike and devoted troops, he united the offices of Pacha of two tails of Janina, of Toparch of Thessaly, and of Provost Marshal of the Highway. As influential aids both to his reputation for general ability and the terror of his arms, and his authority as ruler, there stood by his side two sons, Mouktar and Veli, offspring of his wife Emineh, both fully grown and carefully educated in the principles of their father.

Ali's first care, once master of Janina, was to annihilate the beys forming the aristocracy of the place, whose hatred he was well aware of, and whose plots he dreaded. He ruined them all, banishing many and putting others to death. Knowing that he must make friends to supply the vacancy caused by the destruction of his foes, he enriched with the spoil the Albanian mountaineers in his pay, known by the name of Skipetars, on whom he conferred most of the vacant employments. But much too prudent to allow all the power to fall into the hands of a single caste, although a foreign one to the capital, he, by a singular innovation, added to and mixed with them an infusion of Orthodox Greeks, a skilful but de-

spised race, whose talents he could use without having to dread their influence. While thus endeavouring on one side to destroy the power of his enemies by depriving them of both authority and wealth, and on the other to consolidate his own by establishing a firm administration, he neglected no means of acquiring popularity. A fervent disciple of Mahomet when among fanatic Mussulmans, a materialist with the Bektagis who professed a rude pantheism, a Christian among the Greeks, with whom he drank to the health of the Holy Virgin, he made everywhere partisans by flattering the idea most in vogue. But if he constantly changed both opinions and language when dealing with subordinates whom it was desirable to win over, Ali towards his superiors had one only line of conduct which he never transgressed. Obsequious towards the Sublime Porte, so long as it did not interfere with his private authority, he not only paid with exactitude all dues to the sultan, to whom he even often advanced money, but he also pensioned the most influential ministers. He was bent on having no enemies who could really injure his power, and he knew that in an absolute government no conviction can hold its own against the power of gold.

Having thus annihilated the nobles, deceived the multitude with plausible words and lulled to

sleep the watchfulness of the Divan, Ali resolved to turn his arms against Kormovo. At the foot of its rocks he had, in youth, experienced the disgrace of defeat, and during thirty nights Kamco and Chaïnitza had endured all horrors of outrage at the hands of its warriors. Thus the implacable pacha had a twofold wrong to punish, a double vengeance to exact.

This time, profiting by experience, he called in the aid of treachery. Arrived at the citadel, he negotiated, promised an amnesty, forgiveness for all, actual rewards for some. The inhabitants, only too happy to make peace with so formidable an adversary, demanded and obtained a truce to settle the conditions. This was exactly what Ali expected, and Kormovo, sleeping on the faith of the treaty, was suddenly attacked and taken. All who did not escape by flight perished by the sword in the darkness, or by the hand of the executioner the next morning. Those who had offered violence aforetime to Ali's mother and sister were carefully sought for, and whether convicted or merely accused, were impaled on spits, torn with red-hot pincers, and slowly roasted between two fires; the women were shaved and publicly scourged, and then sold as slaves.

This vengeance, in which all the nobles of the province not yet entirely ruined were compelled

spised race, whose talents he could use without having to dread their influence. While thus endeavouring on one side to destroy the power of his enemies by depriving them of both authority and wealth, and on the other to consolidate his own by establishing a firm administration, he neglected no means of acquiring popularity. A fervent disciple of Mahomet when among fanatic Mussulmans, a materialist with the Bektagis who professed a rude pantheism, a Christian among the Greeks, with whom he drank to the health of the Holy Virgin, he made everywhere partisans by flattering the idea most in vogue. But if he constantly changed both opinions and language when dealing with subordinates whom it was desirable to win over, Ali towards his superiors had one only line of conduct which he never transgressed. Obsequious towards the Sublime Porte, so long as it did not interfere with his private authority [illegible] paid with exactitude all dues [illegible] he even often advanced [illegible] sioned the most influential [illegible] on having no enemies [illegible] power, and he knew [illegible] ment no conviction [illegible] power of gold.

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to assist, was worth a decisive victory to Ali. Towns, cantons, whole districts, overwhelmed with terror, submitted without striking a blow, and his name, joined to the recital of a massacre which ranked as a glorious exploit in the eyes of this savage people, echoed like thunder from valley to valley and mountain to mountain. In order that all surrounding him might participate in the joy of his success Ali gave his army a splendid festival. Of unrivalled activity, and, Mohammedan only in name, he himself led the chorus in the Pyrrhic and Klephtic dances, the ceremonials of warriors and of robbers. There was no lack of wine, of sheep, goats, and lambs roasted before enormous fires, made of the débris of the ruined city; antique games of archery and wrestling were celebrated, and the victors received their prizes from the hand of their chief. The plunder, slaves, and cattle were then shared, and the Tapygæ, considered as the lowest of the four tribes composing the race of Skipetars, and ranking as the refuse of the army, carried off into the mountains of Acroceraunia, doors, windows, nails, and even the tiles of the houses, which were then all surrendered to the flames.

However, Ibrahim, the successor and son-in-law of Kurd Pacha, could not see with indifference part of his province invaded by his ambitious

neighbour. He complained and negotiated, but obtaining no satisfaction, called out an army composed of Skipetars of Toxid, all Islamites, and gave the command to his brother Sepher, Bey of Avlone. Ali, who had adopted the policy of opposing alternately the Cross to the Crescent and the Crescent to the Cross, summoned to his aid the Christian chiefs of the mountains, who descended into the plains at the head of their unconquered troops. As is generally the case in Albania, where war is merely an excuse for brigandage, instead of deciding matters by a pitched battle, both sides contented themselves with burning villages, hanging peasants, and carrying off cattle.

Also, in accordance with the custom of the country, the women interposed between the combatants, and the good and gentle Emineh laid proposals of peace before Ibrahim Pacha, to whose apathetic disposition a state of war was disagreeable, and who was only too happy to conclude a fairly satisfactory negotiation. A family alliance was arranged, in virtue of which Ali retained his conquests, which were considered as the marriage portion of Ibrahim's eldest daughter, who became the wife of Ali's eldest son, Mouktar.

It was hoped that this peace might prove permanent, but the marriage which sealed the treaty was barely concluded before a fresh quarrel broke

out between the pachas. Ali, having wrung such important concessions from the weakness of his neighbour, desired to obtain yet more. But closely allied to Ibrahim were two persons gifted with great firmness of character and unusual ability, whose position gave them great influence. They were his wife Zaidee, and his brother Sepher, who had been in command during the war just terminated. As both were inimical to Ali, who could not hope to corrupt them, the latter resolved to get rid of them.

Having in the days of his youth been intimate with Kurd Pacha, Ali had endeavoured to seduce his daughter, already the wife of Ibrahim. Being discovered by the latter in the act of scaling the wall of his harem, he had been obliged to fly the country. Wishing now to ruin the woman whom he had formerly tried to corrupt, Ali sought to turn his former crime to the success of a new one. Anonymous letters, secretly sent to Ibrahim, warned him that his wife intended to poison him, in order to be able later to marry Ali Pacha, whom she had always loved. In a country like Turkey, where to suspect a woman is to accuse her, and accusation is synonymous with condemnation, such a calumny might easily cause the death of the innocent Zaidee. But if Ibrahim was weak and indolent, he was also confiding and generous. He took

the letters to his wife, who had no difficulty in clearing herself, and who warned him against the writer, whose object and plots she easily divined, so that this odious conspiracy turned only to Ali's discredit. But the latter was not likely either to concern himself as to what others said or thought about him or to be disconcerted by a failure. He simply turned his machinations against his other enemy, and arranged matters this time so as to avoid a failure.

He sent to Zagori, a district noted for its doctors, for a quack who undertook to poison Sepher Bey on condition of receiving forty purses. When all was settled, the miscreant set out for Berat, and was immediately accused by Ali of evasion, and his wife and children were arrested as accomplices and detained, apparently as hostages for the good behaviour of their husband and father, but really as pledges for his silence when the crime should have been accomplished. Sepher Bey, informed of this by letters which Ali wrote to the Pacha of Berat demanding the fugitive, thought that a man persecuted by his enemy would be faithful to himself, and took the supposed runaway into his service. The traitor made skilful use of the kindness of his too credulous protector, insinuated himself into his confidence, became his trusted physician and apothecary, and gave him

poison instead of medicine on the very first appearance of indisposition. As soon as symptoms of death appeared, the poisoner fled, aided by the emissaries of Ali, with whom the court of Berat was packed, and presented himself at Janina to receive the reward of his crime. Ali thanked him for his zeal, commended his skill, and referred him to the treasurer. But the instant the wretch left the seraglio in order to receive his recompense, he was seized by the executioners and hurried to the gallows. In thus punishing the assassin, Ali at one blow discharged the debt he owed him, disposed of the single witness to be dreaded, and displayed his own friendship for the victim! Not content with this, he endeavoured to again throw suspicion on the wife of Ibrahim Pacha, whom he accused of being jealous of the influence which Sepher Pacha had exercised in the family. This he mentioned regularly in conversation, writing in the same style to his agents at Constantinople, and everywhere where there was any profit in slandering a family whose ruin he desired for the sake of their possessions. Before long he made a pretext out of the scandal started by himself, and prepared to take up arms in order, he said, to avenge his friend Sepher Bey, when he was anticipated by Ibrahim Pacha, who roused against him the allied Christians of Thesprotia, foremost among whom ranked the Su-

liots, famed through Albania for their courage and their love of independence.

After several battles, in which his enemies had the advantage, Ali began negotiations with Ibrahim, and finally concluded a treaty offensive and defensive. This fresh alliance was, like the first, to be cemented by a marriage. The virtuous Emineh, seeing her son Veli united to the second daughter of Ibrahim, trusted that the feud between the two families was now quenched, and thought herself at the summit of happiness. But her joy was not of long duration; the death-groan was again to be heard amidst the songs of the marriage-feast.

The daughter of Chaïnitza, by her first husband, Ali, had married a certain Murad, the Bey of Cleïsoura. This nobleman, attached to Ibrahim Pacha by both blood and affection, since the death of Sepher Bey, had, become the special object of Ali's hatred, caused by the devotion of Murad to his patron, over whom he had great influence, and from whom nothing could detach him. Skilful in concealing truth under special pretexts, Ali gave out that the cause of his known dislike to this young man was that the latter, although his nephew by marriage, had several times fought in hostile ranks against him. Therefore the amiable Ibrahim made use of the marriage treaty to arrange an honourable reconciliation between Murad Bey and

his uncle, and appointed the former "Ruler of the Marriage Feast," in which capacity he was charged to conduct the bride to Janina and deliver her to her husband, the young Veli Bey. He accomplished his mission satisfactorily, and was received by Ali with all apparent hospitality. The festival began on his arrival towards the end of November 1791, and had already continued several days, when suddenly it was announced that a shot had been fired upon Ali, who had only escaped by a miracle, and that the assassin was still at large. This news spread terror through the city and the palace, and everyone dreaded being seized as the guilty person. Spies were everywhere employed, but they declared search was useless, and that there must be an extensive conspiracy against Ali's life. The latter complained of being surrounded by enemies, and announced that henceforth he would receive only one person at a time, who should lay down his arms before entering the hall now set apart for public audience. It was a chamber built over a vault, and entered by a sort of trap-door, only reached by a ladder.

After having for several days received his couriers in this sort of dovecot, Ali summoned his nephew in order to entrust with him the wedding gifts. Murad took this as a sign of favour, and joyfully acknowledged the congratulations of his

friends. He presented himself at the time arranged, the guards at the foot of the ladder demanded his arms, which he gave up readily, and ascended the ladder full of hope. Scarcely had the trap-door closed behind him when a pistol ball, fired from a dark corner, broke his shoulder blade, and he fell, but sprang up and attempted to fly. Ali issued from his hiding place and sprang upon him, but notwithstanding his wound the young bey defended himself vigorously, uttering terrible cries. The pacha, eager to finish, and finding his hands insufficient, caught a burning log from the hearth, struck his nephew in the face with it, felled him to the ground, and completed his bloody task. This accomplished, Ali called for help with loud cries, and when his guards entered he showed the bruises he had received and the blood with which he was covered, declaring that he had killed in self-defence a villain who endeavoured to assassinate him. He ordered the body to be searched, and a letter was found in a pocket which Ali had himself just placed there, which purported to give the details of the pretended conspiracy.

As Murad's brother was seriously compromised by this letter, he also was immediately seized, and strangled without any pretence of trial. The whole palace rejoiced, thanks were rendered to Heaven by one of those sacrifices of animals still occasion-

ally made in the East to celebrate an escape from great danger, and Ali released some prisoners in order to show his gratitude to Providence for having protected him from so horrible a crime. He received congratulatory visits, and composed an apology attested by a judicial declaration by the cadi, in which the memory of Murad and his brother was declared accursed. Finally, commissioners, escorted by a strong body of soldiers, were sent to seize the property of the two brothers, because, said the decree, it was just that the injured should inherit the possessions of his would-be assassins.

Thus was exterminated the only family capable of opposing the Pacha of Janina, or which could counterbalance his influence over the weak Ibrahim of Berat. The latter, abandoned by his brave defenders, and finding himself at the mercy of his enemy, was compelled to submit to what he could not prevent, and protested only by tears against these crimes, which seemed to herald a terrible future for himself.

As for Emineh, it is said that from the date of this catastrophe she separated herself almost entirely from her blood-stained husband, and spent her life in the recesses of the harem, praying as a Christian both for the murderer and his victims. It is a relief, in the midst of this atrocious satur-

nalia, to encounter this noble and gentle character, which, like a desert oasis, affords a rest to eyes wearied with the contemplation of so much wickedness and treachery.

Ali lost in her the guardian angel who alone could in any way restrain his violent passions. Grieved at first by the withdrawal of the wife whom hitherto he had loved exclusively, he endeavoured in vain to regain her affection; and then sought in new vices compensation for the happiness he had lost, and gave himself up to sensuality. Ardent in everything, he carried debauchery to a monstrous extent, and as if his palaces were not large enough for his desires, he assumed various disguises; sometimes in order to traverse the streets by night in search of the lowest pleasures; sometimes penetrating by day into churches and private houses seeking for young men and maidens remarkable for their beauty, who were then carried off to his harem.

His sons, following in his footsteps, kept also scandalous households, and seemed to dispute preeminence in evil with their father, each in his own manner. Drunkenness was the speciality of the eldest, Mouktar, who was without rival among the hard drinkers of Albania, and who was reputed to have emptied a whole wine-skin in one evening after a plentiful meal. Gifted with the hereditary

violence of his family, he had, in his drunken fury, slain several persons, among others his sword-bearer, the companion of his childhood and confidential friend of his whole life. Veli chose a different course. Realising the Marquis de Sade as his father had realised Macchiavelli, he delighted in mingling together debauchery and cruelty, and his amusement consisted in biting the lips he had kissed, and tearing with his nails the forms he had caressed. The people of Janina saw with horror more than one woman in their midst whose nose and ears he had caused to be cut off, and had then turned into the streets.

It was indeed a reign of terror; neither fortune, life, honour, nor family were safe. Mothers cursed their fruitfulness, and women their beauty. Fear soon engenders corruption, and subjects are speedily tainted by the depravity of their masters. Ali, considering a demoralised race as easier to govern, looked on with satisfaction.

While he strengthened by every means his authority from within, he missed no opportunity of extending his rule without. In 1803 he declared war against the Suliots, whose independence he had frequently endeavoured either to purchase or to overthrow. The army sent against them, although ten thousand strong, was at first beaten everyhere. Ali then, as usual, brought treason to

his aid, and regained the advantage. It became evident that, sooner or later, the unhappy Suliots must succumb.

Foreseeing the horrors which their defeat would entail, Emineh, touched with compassion, issued from her seclusion and cast herself at Ali's feet. He raised her, seated her beside him, and inquired as to her wishes. She spoke of generosity, of mercy; he listened as if touched and wavering, until she named the Suliots. Then, filled with fury, he seized a pistol and fired at her. She was not hurt, but fell to the ground overcome with terror, and her women hastily intervened and carried her away. For the first time in his life, perhaps, Ali shuddered before the dread of a murder.

It was his wife, the mother of his children, whom he saw lying at his feet, and the recollection afflicted and tormented him. He rose in the night and went to Emineh's apartment; he knocked and called, but being refused admittance, in his anger he broke open the door. Terrified by the noise, and at the sight of her infuriated husband, Emineh fell into violent convulsions, and shortly expired. Thus perished the daugher of Capelan Pacha, wife of Ali Tepeleni, and mother of Mouktar and Veli, who, doomed to live surrounded by evil, yet remained virtuous and good.

Her death caused universal mourning through-

out Albania, and produced a not less deep impression on the mind of her murderer. Emineh's spectre pursued him in his pleasures, in the council chamber, in the hours of night. He saw her, he heard her, and would awake, exclaiming, "My wife! my wife!—It is my wife!—Her eyes are angry; she threatens me!—Save me! Mercy!" For more than ten years Ali never dared to sleep alone.

CHAPTER IV

IN December, the Suliots, decimated by battle, worn by famine, discouraged by treachery, were obliged to capitulate. The treaty gave them leave to go where they would, their own mountains excepted. The unfortunate tribe divided into two parts, the one going towards Parga, the other towards Prevesa. Ali gave orders for the destruction of both, notwithstanding the treaty.

The Parga division was attacked in its march, and charged by a numerous body of Skipetars. Its destruction seemed imminent, but instinct suddenly revealed to the ignorant mountaineers the one manœuvre which might save them. They formed a square, placing old men, women, children, and cattle in the midst, and, protected by this military formation, entered Parga in full view of the cut-throats sent to pursue them.

Less fortunate was the Prevesa division, which, terrified by a sudden and unexpected attack, fled in disorder to a Greek convent called Zalongos. But the gate was soon broken down, and the unhappy Suliots massacred to the last man.

The women, whose tents had been pitched on the summit of a lofty rock, beheld the terrible carnage which destroyed their defenders. Henceforth their only prospect was that of becoming the slaves of those who had just slaughtered their husbands and brothers. An heroic resolution spared them this infamy; they joined hands, and chanting their national songs, moved in a solemn dance round the rocky platform. As the song ended, they uttered a prolonged and piercing cry, and cast themselves and their children down into the profound abyss beneath.

There were still some Suliots left in their country when Ali Pacha took possession of it. These were all taken and brought to Janina, and their sufferings were the first adornments of the festival made for the army. Every soldier's imagination was racked for the discovery of new tortures, and the most original among them had the privilege of themselves carrying out their inventions.

There were some who, having had their noses and ears cut off, were compelled to eat them raw, dressed as a salad. One young man was scalped until the skin fell back upon his shoulders, then beaten round the court of the seraglio for the pacha's entertainment, until at length a lance was run through his body and he was cast on the funeral pile. Many were boiled alive and their flesh then thrown to the dogs.

From this time the Cross has disappeared from the Selleid mountains, and the gentle prayer of Christ no longer wakes the echoes of Suli.

During the course of this war, and shortly after the death of Emineh, another dismal drama was enacted in the pacha's family, whose active wickedness nothing seemed to weary. The scandalous libertinism of both father and sons had corrupted all around as well as themselves. This demoralisation brought bitter fruits for all alike: the subjects endured a terrible tyranny; the masters sowed among themselves distrust, discord, and hatred. The father wounded his two sons by turns in their tenderest affections, and the sons avenged themselves by abandoning their father in the hour of danger.

There was in Janina a woman named Euphrosyne, a niece of the archbishop, married to one of the richest Greek merchants, and noted for wit and beauty. She was already the mother of two children, when Mouktar became enamoured of her, and ordered her to come to his palace. The unhappy Euphrosyne, at once guessing his object, summoned a family council to decide what should be done. All agreed that there was no escape, and that her husband's life was in danger, on account of the jealousy of his terrible rival. He fled the city that same night, and his wife surrendered herself to Mouktar,

who, softened by her charms, soon sincerely loved her, and overwhelmed her with presents and favours. Things were in this position when Mouktar was obliged to depart on an important expedition.

Scarcely had he started before his wives complained to Ali that Euphrosyne usurped their rights and caused their husband to neglect them. Ali, who complained greatly of his sons' extravagance, and regretted the money they squandered, at once struck a blow which was both to enrich himself and increase the terror of his name.

One night he appeared by torchlight, accompanied by his guards, at Euphrosyne's house. Knowing his cruelty and avarice, she sought to disarm one by gratifying the other: she collected her money and jewels and laid them at Ali's feet with a look of supplication.

"These things are only my own property, which you restore," said he, taking possession of the rich offering. "Can you give back the heart of Mouktar, which you have stolen?"

Euphrosyne besought him by his paternal feelings, for the sake of his son whose love had been her misfortune and was now her only crime, to spare a mother whose conduct had been otherwise irreproachable. But her tears and pleadings produced no effect on Ali, who ordered her to be taken, loaded

with fetters and covered with a piece of sackcloth, to the prison of the seraglio.

If it were certain that there was no hope for the unhappy Euphrosyne, one trusted that she might at least be the only victim. But Ali, professing to follow the advice of some severe reformers who wished to restore decent morality, arrested at the same time fifteen ladies belonging to the best Christian families in Janina. A Wallachian, named Nicholas Janco, took the opportunity to denounce his own wife, who was on the point of becoming a mother, as guilty of adultery, and handed her also over to the pacha. These unfortunate women were brought before Ali to undergo a trial of which a sentence of death was the foregone conclusion. They were then confined in a dungeon, where they spent two days of misery. The third night, the executioners appeared to conduct them to the lake where they were to perish. Euphrosyne, too exhausted to endure to the end, expired by the way, and when she was flung with the rest into the dark waters, her soul had already escaped from its earthly tenement. Her body was found the next day, and was buried in the cemetery of the monastery of Saints-Anargyres, where her tomb, covered with white iris and sheltered by a wild olive tree, is yet shown.

Mouktar was returning from his expedition when

a courier from his brother Veli brought him a letter informing him of these events. He opened it. "Euphrosyne!" he cried, and, seizing one of his pistols, fired it at the messenger, who fell dead at his feet,—"Euphrosyne, behold thy first victim!" Springing on his horse, he galloped towards Janina. His guards followed at a distance, and the inhabitants of all the villages he passed fled at his approach. He paid no attention to them, but rode till his horse fell dead by the lake which had engulfed Euphrosyne, and then, taking a boat, he went to hide his grief and rage in his own palace.

Ali, caring little for passion which evaporated in tears and cries, sent an order to Mouktar to appear before him at once. "He will not kill *you*," he remarked to his messenger, with a bitter smile. And, in fact, the man who a moment before was furiously raging and storming against his father, as if overwhelmed by this imperious message, calmed down, and obeyed.

"Come hither, Mouktar," said the pacha, extending his murderous hand to be kissed as soon as his son appeared. "I shall take no notice of your anger, but in future never forget that a man who braves public opinion as I do fears nothing in the world. You can go now; when your troops have rested from their march, you can come and ask for orders. Go, remember what I have said."

Mouktar retired as submissively as if he had just received pardon for some serious crime, and found no better consolation than to spend the night with Veli in drinking and debauchery. But a day was to come when the brothers, alike outraged by their father, would plot and carry out a terrible vengeance.

However, the Porte began to take umbrage at the continual aggrandisement of the Pacha of Janina. Not daring openly to attack so formidable a vassal, the sultan sought by underhand means to diminish his power, and under the pretext that Ali was becoming too old for the labour of so many offices, the government of Thessaly was withdrawn from him, but, to show that this was not done in enmity, the province was entrusted to his nephew, Elmas Bey, son of Suleiman and Chaïnitza.

Chaïnitza, fully as ambitious as her brother, could not contain her delight at the idea of governing in the name of her son, who was weak and gentle in character and accustomed to obey her implicitly. She asked her brother's permission to go to Trikala to be present at the installation, and obtained it, to everybody's astonishment; for no one could imagine that Ali would peacefully renounce so important a government as that of Thessaly. However, he dissembled so skilfully that everyone was deceived by his apparent resignation, and applauded his mag-

nanimity, when he provided his sister with a brilliant escort to conduct her to the capital of the province of which he had just been deprived in favour of his nephew. He sent letters of congratulation to the latter as well as magnificent presents, among them a splendid pelisse of black fox, which had cost more than a hundred thousand francs of Western money. He requested Elmas Bey to honour him by wearing this robe on the day when the sultan's envoy should present him with the firman of investiture, and Chaïnitza herself was charged to deliver both gifts and messages.

Chaïnitza arrived safely at Trikala, and faithfully delivered the messages with which she had been entrusted. When the ceremony she so ardently desired took place, she herself took charge of all the arrangements. Elmas, wearing the black fox pelisse, was proclaimed, and acknowledged as Governor of Thessaly in her presence. "My son is pacha!" she cried in the delirium of joy. "My son is pacha! and my nephews will die of envy!" But her triumph was not to be of long duration. A few days after his installation, Elmas began to feel strangely languid. Continual lethargy, convulsive sneezing, feverish eyes, soon betokened a serious illness. Ali's gift had accomplished its purpose. The pelisse, carefully impregnated with smallpox germs taken from a young girl suffering from this

malady, had conveyed the dreaded disease to the new pacha, who, not having been inoculated, died in a few days.

The grief of Chaïnitza at her son's death displayed itself in sobs, threats, and curses, but, not knowing whom to blame for her misfortune, she hastened to leave the scene of it, and returned to Janina, to mingle her tears with those of her brother. She found Ali apparently in such depths of grief, that instead of suspecting, she was actually tempted to pity him, and this seeming sympathy soothed her distress, aided by the caresses of her second son, Aden Bey. Ali, thoughtful of his own interests, took care to send one of his own officers to Trikala, to administer justice in the place of his deceased nephew, and the Porte, seeing that all attempts against him only caused misfortune, consented to his resuming the government of Thessaly.

This climax roused the suspicions of many persons. But the public voice, already discussing the causes of the death of Elmas, was stifled by the thunder of the cannon, which, from the ramparts of Janina, announced to Epirus the birth of another son to Ali, Salik Bey, whose mother was a Georgian slave.

Fortune, seemingly always ready both to crown Ali's crimes with success and to fulfil his wishes, had yet in reserve a more precious gift than any of

the others, that of a good and beautiful wife, who should replace, and even efface the memory of the beloved Emineh.

The Porte, while sending to Ali the firman which restored to him the government of Thessaly, ordered him to seek out and destroy a society of coiners who dwelt within his jurisdiction. Ali, delighted to prove his zeal by a service which cost nothing but bloodshed, at once set his spies to work, and having discovered the abode of the gang, set out for the place attended by a strong escort. It was a village called Plikivitza.

Having arrived in the evening, he spent the night in taking measures to prevent escape, and at break of day attacked the village suddenly with his whole force. The coiners were seized in the act. Ali immediately ordered the chief to be hung at his own door and the whole population to be massacred. Suddenly a young girl of great beauty made her way through the tumult and sought refuge at his feet. Ali, astonished, asked who she was. She answered with a look of mingled innocence and terror, kissing his hands, which she bathed with tears, and said—

"O my lord! I implore thee to intercede with the terrible vizier Ali for my mother and brothers. My father is dead, behold where he hangs at the door of our cottage! But we have done nothing

Of unrivalled activity, and Mohammedan only in name, he himself led the chorus in the Pyrrhic and Klephtic dances, the ceremonials of warriors and of robbers.

—p. 2158

From the painting by J. L. Gerome

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to rouse the anger of our dreadful master. My mother is a poor woman who never offended anyone, and we are only weak children. Save us from him!"

Touched in spite of himself, the pacha took the girl in his arms, and answered her with a gentle smile—

"Thou hast come to the wrong man, child: I am this terrible vizier."

"Oh no, no! you are good, you will be our good lord."

"Well, be comforted, my child, and show me thy mother and thy brothers; they shall be spared. Thou hast saved their lives."

And as she knelt at his feet, overcome with joy, he raised her and asked her name.

"Basilessa," she replied.

"Basilessa, Queen! it is a name of good augury. Basilessa, thou shalt dwell with me henceforth."

And he collected the members of her family, and gave orders for them to be sent to Janina in company with the maiden, who repaid his mercy with boundless love and devotion.

Let us mention one trait of gratitude shown by Ali at the end of this expedition, and his record of good deeds is then closed. Compelled by a storm to take refuge in a miserable hamlet, he inquired its name, and on hearing it appeared surprised and

thoughtful, as if trying to recall lost memories. Suddenly he asked if a woman named Nouza dwelt in the village, and was told there was an old infirm woman of that name in great poverty. He ordered her to be brought before him. She came and prostrated herself in terror. Ali raised her kindly.

"Dost thou not know me?" he asked.

"Have mercy, great Vizier," answered the poor woman, who, having nothing to lose but her life, imagined that even that would be taken from her.

"I see," said the pacha, "that if thou knowest me, thou dost not really recognise me."

The woman looked at him wonderingly, not understanding his words in the least.

"Dost thou remember," continued Ali, "that forty years ago a young man asked for shelter from the foes who pursued him? Without inquiring his name or standing, thou didst hide him in thy humble house, and dressed his wounds, and shared thy scanty food with him, and when he was able to go forward thou didst stand on thy threshold to wish him good luck and success. Thy wishes were heard, for the young man was Ali Tepeleni, and I who speak am he!"

The old woman stood overwhelmed with astonishment. She departed calling down blessings on the pacha, who assured her a pension of fifteen hundred francs for the rest of her days.

But these two good actions are only flashes of light illuminating the dark horizon of Ali's life for a brief moment. Returned to Janina, he resumed his tyranny, his intrigues, and cruelty. Not content with the vast territory which owned his sway, he again invaded that of his neighbours on every pretext. Phocis, Œtolia, Acarnania, were by turns occupied by his troops, the country ravaged, and the inhabitants decimated. At the same time he compelled Ibrahim Pacha to surrender his last remaining daughter, and give her in marriage to his nephew, Aden Bey, the son of Chaïnitza. This new alliance with a family he had so often attacked and despoiled gave him fresh arms against it, whether by being enabled better to watch the pacha's sons, or to entice them into some snare with greater ease.

Whilst he thus married his nephew, he did not neglect the advancement of his sons. By the aid of the French Ambassador, whom he had convinced of his devotion to the Emperor Napoleon, he succeeded in getting the pachalik of Morea bestowed on Veli, and that of Lepanto on Mouktar. But as in placing his sons in these exalted positions his only aim was to aggrandise and consolidate his own power, he himself ordered their retinues, giving them officers of his own choosing. When they departed to their governments, he kept their wives,

their children, and even their furniture as pledges, saying that they ought not to be encumbered with domestic establishments in time of war, Turkey just then being at open war with England. He also made use of this opportunity to get rid of people who displeased him, among others, of a certain Ismail Pacho Bey, who had been alternately both tool and enemy, whom he made secretary to his son Veli, professedly as a pledge of reconciliation and favour, but really in order to despoil him more easily of the considerable property which he possessed at Janina. Pacho was not deceived, and showed his resentment openly. "The wretch banishes me," he cried, pointing out Ali, who was sitting at a window in the palace, "he sends me away in order to rob me; but I will avenge myself whatever happens, and I shall die content if I can procure his destruction at the price of my own."

Continually increasing his power, Ali endeavoured to consolidate it permanently. He had entered by degrees into secret negotiations with all the great powers of Europe, hoping in the end to make himself independent, and to obtain recognition as Prince of Greece. A mysterious and unforeseen incident betrayed this to the Porte, and furnished actual proofs of his treason in letters confirmed by Ali's own seal. The Sultan Selim immediately sent to Janina a "kapidgi-bachi," or

plenipotentiary, to examine into the case and try the delinquent.

Arrived at Janina, this officer placed before Ali the proofs of his understanding with the enemies of the State. Ali was not strong enough to throw off the mask, and yet could not deny such overwhelming evidence. He determined to obtain time.

"No wonder," said he, "that I appear guilty in the eyes of His Highness. This seal is certainly mine, I cannot deny it; but the writing is not that of my secretaries, and the seal must have been obtained and used to sign these guilty letters in order to ruin me. I pray you to grant me a few days in order to clear up this iniquitous mystery, which compromises me in the eyes of my master the sultan and of all good Mahommedans. May Allah grant me the means of proving my innocence, which is as pure as the rays of the sun, although everything seems against me!"

After this conference, Ali, pretending to be engaged in a secret inquiry, considered how he could legally escape from this predicament. He spent some days in making plans which were given up as soon as formed, until his fertile genius at length suggested a means of getting clear of one of the greatest difficulties in which he had ever found himself. Sending for a Greek whom he had often employed, he addressed him thus:—

"Thou knowest I have always shown thee favour, and the day is arrived when thy fortune shall be made. Henceforth thou shalt be as my son, thy children shall be as mine, my house shall be thy home, and in return for my benefits I require one small service. This accursed kapidgi-bachi has come hither bringing certain papers signed with my seal, intending to use them to my discredit, and thus to extort money from me. Of money I have already given too much, and I intend this time to escape without being plundered except for the sake of a good servant like thee. Therefore, my son, thou shalt go before the tribunal when I tell thee, and declare before this kapidgi-bachi and the cadi that thou hast written these letters attributed to me, and that thou didst seal them with my seal, in order to give them due weight and importance."

The unhappy Greek grew pale and strove to answer.

"What fearest thou, my son?" resumed Ali. "Speak, am I not thy good master? Thou wilt be sure of my lasting favour, and who is there to dread when I protect thee? Is it the kapidgi-bachi? he has no authority here. I have thrown twenty as good as he into the lake! If more is required to reassure thee, I swear by the Prophet, by my own and my sons' heads, that no harm shall come to thee from him. Be ready, then, to do as I tell thee,

and beware of mentioning this matter to anyone, in order that all may be accomplished according to our mutual wishes."

More terrified by dread of the pacha, from whose wrath in case of refusal there was no chance of escape, than tempted by his promises, the Greek undertook the false swearing required. Ali, delighted, dismissed him with a thousand assurances of protection, and then requested the presence of the sultan's envoy, to whom he said, with much emotion—

"I have at length unravelled the infernal plot laid against me; it is the work of a man in the pay of the implacable enemies of the Sublime Porte, and who is a Russian agent. He is in my power, and I have given him hopes of pardon on condition of full confession. Will you then summon the cadi, the judges and ecclesiastics of the town, in order that they may hear the guilty man's deposition, and that the light of truth may purify their minds?"

The tribunal was soon assembled, and the trembling Greek appeared in the midst of a solemn silence. "Knowest thou this writing?" demanded the cadi.—"It is mine."—"And this seal?"—"It is that of my master, Ali Pacha."—"How does it come to be placed at the foot of these letters?"—"I did this by order of my chief, abusing the confidence

of my master, who occasionally allowed me to use it to sign his orders."—"It is enough: thou canst withdraw."

Uneasy as to the success of his intrigue, Ali was approaching the Hall of Justice. As he entered the court, the Greek, who had just finished his examination, threw himself at his feet, assuring him that all had gone well. "It is good," said Ali; "thou shalt have thy reward." Turning round, he made a sign to his guards, who had their orders, and who instantly seized the unhappy Greek, and, drowning his voice with their shouts, hung him in the court-yard. This execution finished, the pacha presented himself before the judges and inquired the result of their investigation. He was answered by a burst of congratulation. "Well," said he, "the guilty author of this plot aimed at me is no more; I ordered him to be hung without waiting to hear your decision. May all enemies of our glorious sultan perish even as he!"

A report of what had occurred was immediately drawn up, and, to assist matters still further, Ali sent the kapidgi-bachi a gift of fifty purses, which he accepted without difficulty, and also secured the favour of the Divan by considerable presents. The sultan, yielding to the advice of his councillors, appeared to have again received him into favour.

But Ali knew well that this appearance of sunshine was entirely deceptive, and that Selim only professed to believe in his innocence until the day should arrive when the sultan could safely punish his treason. He sought therefore to compass the latter's downfall, and made common cause with his enemies, both internal and external. A conspiracy, hatched between the discontented pachas and the English agents, shortly broke out, and one day, when Ali was presiding at the artillery practice of some French gunners sent to Albania by the Governor of Illyria, a Tartar brought him news of the deposition of Selim, who was succeeded by his nephew Mustapha. Ali sprang up in delight, and publicly thanked Allah for this great good fortune. He really did profit by this change of rulers, but he profited yet more by a second revolution which caused the deaths both of Selim, whom the promoters wished to re-establish on the throne, and of Mustapha whose downfall they intended. Mahmoud II, who was next invested with the scimitar of Othman, came to the throne in troublous times, after much bloodshed, in the midst of great political upheavals, and had neither the will nor the power to attack one of his most powerful vassals. He received with evident satisfaction the million piastres which, at his installation, Ali hastened to send as a proof of his devotion, assured the pacha of his

favour, and confirmed both him and his sons in their offices and dignities. This fortunate change in his position brought Ali's pride and audacity to a climax. Free from pressing anxiety, he determined to carry out a project which had been the dream of his life.

CHAPTER V

AFTER taking possession of Argyro-Castron, which he had long coveted, Ali led his victorious army against the town of Kardiki, whose inhabitants had formerly joined with those of Kormovo in the outrage inflicted on his mother and sister. The besieged, knowing they had no mercy to hope for, defended themselves bravely, but were obliged to yield to famine. After a month's blockade, the common people, having no food for themselves or their cattle, began to cry for mercy in the open streets, and their chiefs, intimidated by the general misery and unable to stand alone, consented to capitulate. Ali, whose intentions as to the fate of this unhappy town were irrevocably decided, agreed to all that they asked. A treaty was signed by both parties, and solemnly sworn to on the Koran, in virtue of which seventy-two beys, heads of the principal Albanian families, were to go to Janina as free men, and fully armed. They were to be received with the honours due to their rank as free tenants of the sultan, their lives and their families were to be spared, and also their posses-

sions. The other inhabitants of Kardiki, being Mohammedans, and therefore brothers of Ali, were to be treated as friends and retain their lives and property. On these conditions a quarter of the town was to be occupied by the victorious troops.

One of the principal chiefs, Saleh Bey, and his wife, foreseeing the fate which awaited their friends, committed suicide at the moment when, in pursuance of the treaty, Ali's soldiers took possession of the quarter assigned to them.

Ali received the seventy-two beys with all marks of friendship when they arrived at Janina. He lodged them in a palace on the lake, and treated them magnificently for some days. But soon, having contrived on some pretext to disarm them, he had them conveyed, loaded with chains, to a Greek convent on an island in the lake, which was converted into a prison. The day of vengeance not having fully arrived, he explained this breach of faith by declaring that the hostages had attempted to escape.

The popular credulity was satisfied by this explanation, and no one doubted the good faith of the pacha when he announced that he was going to Kardiki to establish a police and fulfil the promises he had made to the inhabitants. Even the number of soldiers he took excited no surprise, as Ali was accustomed to travel with a very numerous suite.

After three days' journey, he stopped at Libokhovo, where his sister had resided since the death of Aden Bey, her second son, cut off recently by sickness. What passed in the long interview they had no one knew, but it was observed that Chainitza's tears, which till then had flowed incessantly, stopped as if by magic, and her women, who were wearing mourning, received an order to attire themselves as for a festival. Feasting and dancing, begun in Ali's honour, did not cease after his departure.

He spent the night at Chenderia, a castle built on a rock, whence the town of Kardiki was plainly visible. Next day at daybreak Ali despatched an usher to summon all the male inhabitants of Kardiki to appear before Chenderia, in order to receive assurances of the pacha's pardon and friendship.

The Kardikiotes at once divined that this injunction was the precursor of a terrible vengeance: the whole town echoed with cries and groans, the mosques were filled with people praying for deliverance. The appointed time arrived, they embraced each other as if parting for ever, and then the men, unarmed, in number six hundred and seventy, started for Chenderia. At the gate of the town they encountered a troop of Albanians, who followed as if to escort them, and which increased in number as they proceeded. Soon they arrived

in the dread presence of Ali Pacha. Grouped in formidable masses around him stood several thousand of his fierce soldiery.

The unhappy Kardikiotes realised their utter helplessness, and saw that they, their wives and children, were completely at the mercy of their implacable enemy. They fell prostrate before the pacha, and with all the fervour which the utmost terror could inspire, implored him to grant them a generous pardon.

Ali for some time silently enjoyed the pleasure of seeing his ancient enemies lying before him prostrate in the dust. He then desired them to rise, reassured them, called them brothers, sons, friends of his heart. Distinguishing some of his old acquaintances, he called them to him, spoke familiarly of the days of their youth, of their games, their early friendships, and pointing to the young men, said, with tears in his eyes—

"The discord which has divided us for so many years has allowed children not born at the time of our dissension to grow into men. I have lost the pleasure of watching the development of the offspring of my neighbours and the early friends of my youth, and of bestowing benefits on them, but I hope shortly to repair the natural results of our melancholy divisions."

He then made them splendid promises, and or-

dered them to assemble in a neighbouring caravanserai, where he wished to give them a banquet in proof of reconciliation. Passing from the depths of despair to transports of joy, the Kardikiotes repaired gaily to the caravanserai, heaping blessings on the pacha, and blaming each other for having ever doubted his good faith.

Ali was carried down from Chenderia in a litter, attended by his courtiers, who celebrated his clemency in pompous speeches, to which he replied with gracious smiles. At the foot of the steep descent he mounted his horse, and, followed by his troops, rode towards the caravanserai. Alone, and in silence, he rode twice round it, then, returning to the gate, which had just been closed by his order, he pulled up his horse, and, signing to his own bodyguard to attack the building, "Slay them!" he cried in a voice of thunder.

The guards remained motionless in surprise and horror, then as the pacha, with a roar, repeated his order, they indignantly flung down their arms. In vain he harangued, flattered, or threatened them; some preserved a sullen silence, others ventured to demand mercy. Then he ordered them away, and, calling on the Christian Mirdites who served under his banner—

"To you, brave Latins," he cried, "I will now entrust the duty of exterminating the foes of my

race. Avenge me, and I will reward you magnificently."

A confused murmur rose from the ranks. Ali imagined they were consulting as to what recompense should be required as the price of such a deed.

"Speak," said he; "I am ready to listen to your demands and to satisfy them."

Then the Mirdite leader came forward and threw back the hood of his black cloak.

"O Pacha!" said he, looking Ali boldly in the face, "thy words are an insult; the Mirdites do not slaughter unarmed prisoners in cold blood. Release the Kardikiotes, give them arms, and we will fight them to the death; but we serve thee as soldiers and not as executioners."

At these words, which the black-cloaked battalion received with applause, Ali thought himself betrayed, and looked around with doubt and mistrust. Fear was nearly taking the place of mercy, words of pardon were on his lips, when a certain Athanasius Vaya, a Greek schismatic, and a favourite of the pacha's, whose illegitimate son he was supposed to be, advanced at the head of the scum of the army, and offered to carry out the death sentence. Ali applauded his zeal, gave him full authority to act, and spurred his horse to the top of a neighbouring hill, the better to enjoy the

spectacle. The Christian Mirdites and the Mohammedan guards knelt together to pray for the miserable Kardikiotes, whose last hour had come.

The caravanserai where they were shut in was a square enclosure, open to the sky, and intended to shelter herds of buffaloes. The prisoners having heard nothing of what passed outside, were astonished to behold Athanasius Vaya and his troop appearing on the top of the wall. They did not long remain in doubt. Ali gave the signal by a pistol-shot, and a general fusillade followed. Terrible cries echoed from the court; the prisoners, terrified, wounded, crowded one upon another for shelter. Some ran frantically hither and thither in this enclosure with no shelter and no exit, until they fell, struck down by bullets. Some tried to climb the walls, in hope of either escape or vengeance, only to be flung back by either scimitars or muskets. It was a terrible scene of despair and death.

After an hour of firing, a gloomy silence descended on the place, now occupied solely by a heap of corpses. Ali forbade any burial rites on pain of death, and placed over the gate an inscription in letters of gold, informing posterity that six hundred Kardikiotes had there been sacrificed to the memory of his mother Kamco.

When the shrieks of death ceased in the enclosure, they began to be heard in the town. The as-

sassins spread themselves through it, and having violated the women and children, gathered them into a crowd to be driven to Libokovo. At every halt in this frightful journey fresh marauders fell on the wretched victims, claiming their share in cruelty and debauchery. At length they arrived at their destination, where the triumphant and implacable Chaïnitza awaited them. As after the taking of Kormovo, she compelled the women to cut off their hair and to stuff with it a mattress on which she lay. She then stripped them, and joyfully narrated to them the massacre of their husbands, fathers, brothers and sons, and when she had sufficiently enjoyed their misery they were again handed over to the insults of the soldiery. Chaïnitza finally published an edict forbidding either clothes, shelter, or food to be given to the women and children of Kardiki, who were then driven forth into the woods either to die of hunger or to be devoured by wild beasts. As to the seventy-two hostages, Ali put them all to death when he returned to Janina. His vengeance was indeed complete.

But as, filled with a horrible satisfaction, the pacha was enjoying the repose of a satiated tiger, an indignant and threatening voice reached him even in the recesses of his palace. The Sheik Yussuf, governor of the castle of Janina, venerated as a saint by the Mohammedans on account of his piety,

and universally beloved and respected for his many virtues, entered Ali's sumptuous dwelling for the first time. The guards on beholding him remained stupefied and motionless, then the most devout prostrated themselves, while others went to inform the pacha; but no one dared hinder the venerable man, who walked calmly and solemnly through the astonished attendants. For him there existed no antechamber, no delay; disdaining the ordinary forms of etiquette, he paced slowly through the various apartments, until, with no usher to announce him, he reached that of Ali. The latter, whose impiety by no means saved him from superstitious terrors, rose hastily from the divan and advanced to meet the holy sheik, who was followed by a crowd of silent courtiers. Ali addressed him with the utmost respect, and endeavoured even to kiss his right hand. Yussuf hastily withdrew it, covered it with his mantle, and signed to the pacha to seat himself. Ali mechanically obeyed, and waited in solemn silence to hear the reason of this unexpected visit.

Yussuf desired him to listen with all attention, and then reproached him for his injustice and rapine, his treachery and cruelty, with such vivid eloquence that his hearers dissolved in tears. Ali, though much dejected, alone preserved his equanimity, until at length the sheik accused him of having

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caused the death of Emineh. He then grew pale, and rising, cried with terror—

"Alas! my father, whose name do you now pronounce? Pray for me, or at least do not sink me to Gehenna with your curses!"

"There is no need to curse thee," answered Yussuf. "Thine own crimes bear witness against thee. Allah has heard their cry. He will summon thee, judge thee, and punish thee eternally. Tremble, for the time is at hand! Thine hour is coming —is coming—is coming!"

Casting a terrible glance at the pacha, the holy man turned his back on him, and stalked out of the apartment without another word.

Ali, in terror, demanded a thousand pieces of gold, put them in a white satin purse, and himself hastened with them to overtake the sheik, imploring him to recall his threats. But Yussuf deigned no answer, and arrived at the threshold of the palace, shook off the dust of his feet against it.

Ali returned to his apartment sad and downcast, and many days elapsed before he could shake off the depression caused by this scene. But soon he felt more ashamed of his inaction than of the reproaches which had caused it, and on the first opportunity resumed his usual mode of life.

The occasion was the marriage of Moustaï, Pacha of Scodra, with the eldest daughter of Veli Pacha,

called the Princess of Aulis, because she had for dowry whole villages in that district. Immediately after the announcement of this marriage Ali set on foot a sort of saturnalia, about the details of which there seemed to be as much mystery as if he had been preparing an assassination.

All at once, as if by a sudden inundation, the very scum of the earth appeared to spread over Janina. The populace, as if trying to drown their misery, plunged into a drunkenness which simulated pleasure. Disorderly bands of mountebanks from the depths of Roumelia traversed the streets, the bazaars and public places; flocks and herds, with fleeces dyed scarlet, and gilded horns, were seen on all the roads driven to the court by peasants under the guidance of their priests. Bishops, abbots, ecclesiastics generally, were compelled to drink, and to take part in ridiculous and indecent dances, Ali apparently thinking to raise himself by degrading his more respectable subjects. Day and night these spectacles succeeded each other with increasing rapidity, the air resounded with firing, songs, cries, music, and the roaring of wild beasts in shows. Enormous spits, loaded with meat, smoked before huge braziers, and wine ran in floods at tables prepared in the palace courts. Troops of brutal soldiers drove workmen from their labour with whips, and compelled them to join in the entertain-

ments; dirty and impudent jugglers invaded private houses, and pretending that they had orders from the pacha to display their skill, carried boldly off whatever they could lay their hands upon. Ali saw the general demoralization with pleasure, especially as it tended to the gratification of his avarice. Every guest was expected to bring to the palace gate a gift in proportion to his means, and four officers watched to see that no one forgot this obligation. At length, on the nineteenth day, Ali resolved to crown the feast by an orgy worthy of himself. He caused the galleries and halls of his castle by the lake to be decorated with unheard-of splendour, and fifteen hundred guests assembled for a solemn banquet. The pacha appeared in all his glory, surrounded by his noble attendants and courtiers, and seating himself on a dais raised above this base crowd which trembled at his glance, gave the signal to begin. At his voice, vice plunged into its most shameless diversions, and the wine-steeped wings of debauchery outspread themselves over the feast. All tongues were at their freest, all imaginations ran wild, all evil passions were at their height, when suddenly the noise ceased, and the guests clung together in terror. A man stood at the entrance of the hall, pale, disordered, and wild-eyed, clothed in torn and blood-stained garments. As everyone made way at his approach, he easily

reached the pacha, and prostrating himself at his feet, presented a letter. Ali opened and rapidly perused it; his lips trembled, his eyebrows met in a terrible frown, the muscles of his forehead contracted alarmingly. He vainly endeavoured to smile and to look as if nothing had happened, his agitation betrayed him, and he was obliged to retire, after desiring a herald to announce that he wished the banquet to continue.

Now for the subject of the message, and the cause of the dismay it produced.

CHAPTER VI

ALI had long cherished a violent passion for Zobeide, the wife of his son Veli Pacha. Having vainly attempted to gratify it after his son's departure, and being indignantly repulsed, he had recourse to drugs, and the unhappy Zobeide remained in ignorance of her misfortune until she found she was pregnant. Then, half-avowals from her women, compelled to obey the pacha from fear of death, mixed with confused memories of her own, revealed the whole terrible truth. Not knowing in her despair which way to turn, she wrote to Ali, entreating him to visit the harem. As head of the family, he had a right to enter, being supposed responsible for the conduct of his sons' families, no law-giver having hitherto contemplated the possibility of so disgraceful a crime. When he appeared, Zobeide flung herself at his feet, speechless with grief. Ali acknowledged his guilt, pleaded the violence of his passion, wept with his victim, and entreating her to control herself and keep silence, promised that all should be made right. Neither the prayers nor tears of Zobeide could

induce him to give up the intention of effacing the traces of his first crime by a second even more horrible.

But the story was already whispered abroad, and Pacho Bey learnt all its details from the spies he kept in Janina. Delighted at the prospect of avenging himself on the father, he hastened with his news to the son. Veli Pacha, furious, vowed vengeance, and demanded Pacho Bey's help, which was readily promised. But Ali had been warned, and was not a man to be taken unawares. Pacho Bey, whom Veli had just promoted to the office of sword-bearer, was attacked in broad daylight by six emissaries sent from Janina. He obtained timely help, however, and five of the assassins, taken red-handed, were at once hung without ceremony in the market-place. The sixth was the messenger whose arrival with the news had caused such dismay at Ali's banquet.

As Ali reflected how the storm he had raised could best be laid, he was informed that the ruler of the marriage feast sent by Moustai, Pacha of Scodra, to receive the young bride who should reign in his harem, had just arrived in the plain of Janina. He was Yussuf Bey of the Délres, an old enemy of Ali's, and had encamped with his escort of eight hundred warriors at the foot of Tomoros of Dodona. Dreading some treachery, he absolutely

refused all entreaties to enter the town, and Ali seeing that it was useless to insist, and that his adversary for the present was safe, at once sent his granddaughter, the Princess of Aulis, out to him.

This matter disposed of, Ali was able to attend to his hideous family tragedy. He began by effecting the disappearance of the women whom he had been compelled to make his accomplices; they were simply sewn up in sacks by gipsies and thrown into the lake. This done, he himself led the executioners into a subterranean part of the castle, where they were beheaded by black mutes as a reward for their obedience. He then sent a doctor to Zobeide, who succeeded in causing a miscarriage, and who, his work done, was seized and strangled by the black mutes who had just beheaded the gipsies. Having thus got rid of all who could bear witness to his crime, he wrote to Veli that he might now send for his wife and two of his children, hitherto detained as hostages, and that the innocence of Zobeide would confound a calumniator who had dared to assail him with such injurious suspicions.

When this letter arrived, Pacho Bey, distrusting equally the treachery of the father and the weakness of the son, and content with having sown the seeds of dissension in his enemy's family, had sufficient wisdom to seek safety in flight. Ali, furious,

vowed, on hearing this, that his vengeance should overtake him even at the ends of the earth. Meanwhile he fell back on Yussuf Bey of the Débres, whose escape when lately at Janina still rankled in his mind. As Yussuf was dangerous both from character and influence, Ali feared to attack him openly, and sought to assassinate him. This was not precisely easy; for, exposed to a thousand dangers of this kind, the nobles of that day were on their guard. Steel and poison were used up, and another way had to be sought. Ali found it.

One of the many adventurers with whom Janina was filled penetrated to the pacha's presence, and offered to sell the secret of a powder whereof three grains would suffice to kill a man with a terrible explosion—explosive powder, in short. Ali heard with delight, but replied that he must see it in action before purchasing.

In the dungeons of the castle by the lake, a poor monk of the order of St. Basil was slowly dying, for having boldly refused a sacrilegious simony proposed to him by Ali. He was a fit subject for the experiment, and was successfully blown to pieces, to the great satisfaction of Ali, who concluded his bargain, and hastened to make use of it. He prepared a false firman, which, according to custom, was enclosed and sealed in a cylindrical case, and

sent to Yussuf Bey by a Greek, wholly ignorant of the real object of his mission. Opening it without suspicion, Yussuf had his arm blown off, and died in consequence, but found time to despatch a message to Moustai Pacha of Scodra, informing him of the catastrophe, and warning him to keep good guard.

Yussuf's letter was received by Moustai just as a similar infernal machine was placed in his hands under cover to his young wife. The packet was seized, and a careful examination disclosed its nature. The mother of Moustai, a jealous and cruel woman, accused her daughter-in-law of complicity, and the unfortunate Ayesha, though shortly to become a mother, expired in agony from the effects of poison, only guilty of being the innocent instrument of her grandfather's treachery.

Fortune having frustrated Ali's schemes concerning Moustai Pacha, offered him as consolation a chance of invading the territory of Parga, the only place in Epirus which had hitherto escaped his rule, and which he greedily coveted. Agia, a small Christian town on the coast, had rebelled against him and allied itself to Parga. It provided an excuse for hostilities, and Ali's troops, under his son Mouktar, first seized Agia, where they only found a few old men to massacre, and then marched on Parga, where the rebels had taken refuge. After a

few skirmishes, Mouktar entered the town, and though the Parganiotes fought bravely, they must inevitably have surrendered had they been left to themselves. But they had sought protection from the French, who had garrisoned the citadel, and the French grenadiers descending rapidly from the height, charged the Turks with so much fury that they fled in all directions, leaving on the field four "bimbashis," or captains of a thousand, and a considerable number of killed and wounded.

The pacha's fleet succeeded no better than his army. Issuing from the Gulf of Ambracia, it was intended to attack Parga from the sea, joining in the massacre, and cutting off all hope of escape from that side, Ali meaning to spare neither the garrison nor any male inhabitants over twelve years of age. But a few shots fired from a small fort dispersed the ships, and a barque manned by sailors from Paxos pursued them, a shot from which killed Ali's admiral on his quarter-deck. He was a Greek of Galaxidi, Athanasius Macrys by name.

Filled with anxiety, Ali awaited news at Prevesa, where a courier, sent off at the beginning of the action, had brought him oranges gathered in the orchards of Parga. Ali gave him a purse of gold, and publicly proclaimed his success. His joy was redoubled when a second messenger presented two heads of French soldiers, and announced that

his troops were in possession of the lower part of Parga. Without further delay he ordered his attendants to mount, entered his carriage, and started triumphantly on the Roman road to Nicopolis. He sent messengers to his generals, ordering them to spare the women and children of Parga, intended for his harem, and above all to take strict charge of the plunder. He was approaching the arena of Nicopolis when a third Tartar messenger informed him of the defeat of his army. Ali changed countenance, and could scarcely articulate the order to return to Prevesa. Once in his palace, he gave way to such fury that all around him trembled, demanding frequently if it could be true that his troops were beaten. "May your misfortune be upon us!" his attendants answered, prostrating themselves. All at once, looking out on the calm blue sea which lay before his windows, he perceived his fleet doubling Cape Pancrator and re-entering the Ambracian Gulf under full sail; it anchored close by the palace, and on hailing the leading ship a speaking-trumpet announced to Ali the death of his admiral, Athanasius Macrys.

"But Parga, Parga!" cried Ali.

"May Allah grant the pacha long life! The Parganiotes have escaped the sword of His Highness."

"It is the will of Allah!" murmured the pacha,

whose head sank upon his breast in dejection.

Arms having failed, Ali, as usual, took refuge in plots and treachery, but this time, instead of currupting his enemies with gold, he sought to weaken them by division.

CHAPTER VII

THE French commander Nicole, surnamed the "Pilgrim," on account of a journey he had once made to Mecca, had spent six months at Janina with a brigade of artillery which General Marmont, then commanding in the Illyrian provinces, had for a time placed at Ali's disposal. The old officer had acquired the esteem and friendship of the pacha, whose leisure he had often amused by stories of his campaigns and various adventures, and although it was now long since they had met, he still had the reputation of being Ali's friend. Ali prepared his plans accordingly. He wrote a letter to Colonel Nicole, apparently in continuation of a regular correspondence between them, in which he thanked the colonel for his continued affection, and besought him by various powerful motives to surrender Parga, of which he promised him the governorship during the rest of his life. He took good care to complete his treason by allowing the letter to fall into the hands of the chief ecclesiastics of Parga, who fell head-foremost into the trap. Seeing that the tone of the letter was in perfect accordance with

the former friendly relations between their French governor and the pacha, they were convinced of the former's treachery. But the result was not as Ali had hoped: the Parganiotes resumed their former negotiations with the English, preferring to place their freedom in the hands of a Christian nation rather than to fall under the rule of a Mohammedan satrap. The English immediately sent a messenger to Colonel Nicole, offering honourable conditions of capitulation. The colonel returned a decided refusal, and threatened to blow up the place if the inhabitants, whose intentions he guessed, made the slightest hostile movement. However, a few days later, the citadel was taken at night, owing to the treachery of a woman who admitted an English detachment; and the next day, to the general astonishment, the British standard floated over the Acropolis of Parga.

All Greece was then profoundly stirred by a faint gleam of the dawn of liberty, and shaken by a suppressed agitation. The Bourbons again reigned in France, and the Greeks built a thousand hopes on an event which changed the basis of the whole European policy. Above all, they reckoned on powerful assistance from Russia. But England had already begun to dread anything which could increase either the possessions or the influence of this formidable power. Above all, she was determined that the

Ottoman Empire should remain intact, and that the Greek navy, beginning to be formidable, must be destroyed. With these objects in view, negotiations with Ali Pacha were resumed. The latter was still smarting under his recent disappointment, and to all overtures answered only, "Parga! I must have Parga." And the English were compelled to yield it!

Trusting to the word of General Campbell, who had formally promised, on its surrender, that Parga should be classed along with the seven Ionian Isles, its grateful inhabitants were enjoying a delicious rest after the storm, when a letter from the Lord High Commissioner, addressed to Lieutenant-Colonel de Bosset, undeceived them, and gave warning of the evils which were to burst on the unhappy town.

On the 25th of March, 1817, notwithstanding the solemn promise made to the Parganiotes, when they admitted the British troops, that they should always be on the same footing as the Ionian Isles, a treaty was signed at Constantinople by the British Plenipotentiary, which stipulated the complete and absolute cession of Parga and all its territory to the Ottoman Empire. Soon there arrived at Janina Sir John Cartwright, the English Consul at Patras, to arrange for the sale of the lands of the Parganiotes and discuss the conditions of their emi-

gration. Never before had any such compact disgraced European diplomacy, accustomed hitherto to regard Turkish encroachments as simple sacrilege. But Ali Pacha fascinated the English agents, overwhelming them with favours, honours, and feasts, carefully watching them all the while. Their correspondence was intercepted, and he endeavoured by means of his agents to rouse the Parganiotes against them. The latter lamented bitterly, and appealed to Christian Europe, which remained deaf to their cries. In the name of their ancestors, they demanded the rights which had been guaranteed them. "They will buy our lands," they said; "have we asked to sell them? And even if we received their value, can gold give us a country and the tombs of our ancestors?"

Ali Pacha invited the Lord High Commissioner of Great Britain, Sir Thomas Maitland, to a conference at Prevesa, and complained of the exorbitant price of £500,000, at which the commissioners had estimated Parga and its territory, including private property and church furniture. It had been hoped that Ali's avarice would hesitate at this high price, but he was not so easily discouraged. He gave a banquet for the Lord High Commissioner, which degenerated into a shameless orgy. In the midst of this drunken hilarity the Turk and the Englishman disposed of the territory of Parga,

agreeing that a fresh estimate should be made on the spot by experts chosen by both English and Turks. The result of this valuation was that the indemnity granted to the Christians was reduced by the English to the sum of £276,075 sterling, instead of the original £500,000. And as Ali's agents only arrived at the sum of £56,750, a final conference was held at Buthrotum between Ali and the Lord High Commissioner. The latter then informed the Parganiotes that the indemnity allowed them was irrevocably fixed at £150,000! The transaction is a disgrace to the egotistical and venal nation which thus allowed the life and liberty of a people to be trifled with, a lasting blot on the honour of England!

The Parganiotes at first could believe neither in the infamy of their protectors nor in their own misfortune; but both were soon confirmed by a proclamation of the Lord High Commissioner, informing them that the pacha's army was marching to take possession of the territory which, by May 10th, must be abandoned for ever.

The fields were then in full bearing. In the midst of plains ripening for a rich harvest were 81,000 square feet of olive trees, alone estimated at two hundred thousand guineas. The sun shone in cloudless azure, the air was balmy with the scent of orange trees, of pomegranates and citrons. But

the lovely country might have been inhabited by phantoms; only hands raised to heaven and brows bent to the dust met one's eye. Even the very dust belonged no more to the wretched inhabitants; they were forbidden to take a fruit or a flower, the priests might not remove either relics or sacred images. Church ornaments, torches, tapers, pyxes, had by this treaty all become Mahommedan property. The English had sold everything, even to the Host! Two days more, and all must be left. Each was silently marking the door of the dwelling destined so soon to shelter an enemy, with a red cross, when suddenly a terrible cry echoed from street to street, for the Turks had been perceived on the heights overlooking the town. Terrified and despairing, the whole population hastened to fall prostrate before the Virgin of Parga, the ancient guardian of their citadel. A mysterious voice, proceeding from the sanctuary, reminded them that the English had, in their iniquitous treaty, forgotten to include the ashes of those whom a happier fate had spared the sight of the ruin of Parga. Instantly they rushed to the graveyards, tore open the tombs, and collected the bones and putrefying corpses. The beautiful olive trees were felled, an enormous funeral pyre arose, and in the general excitement the orders of the English chief were defied. With naked daggers in their hands, standing in the crimson light of

the flames which were consuming the bones of their ancestors, the people of Parga vowed to slay their wives and children, and to kill themselves to the last man, if the infidels dared to set foot in the town before the appointed hour. Xenocles, the last of the Greek poets, inspired by this sublime manifestation of despair, even as Jeremiah by the fall of Jerusalem, improvised a hymn which expresses all the grief of the exiles, and which the exiles interrupted by their tears and sobs.

A messenger, crossing the sea in all haste, informed the Lord High Commissioner of the terrible threat of the Parganiotes. He started at once, accompanied by General Sir Frederic Adams, and landed at Parga by the light of the funeral pyre. He was received with ill-concealed indignation, and with assurances that the sacrifice would be at once consummated unless Ali's troops were held back. The general endeavoured to console and to reassure the unhappy people, and then proceeded to the outposts, traversing silent streets in which armed men stood at each door only waiting a signal before slaying their families, and then turning their weapons against the English and themselves. He implored them to have patience, and they answered by pointing to the approaching Turkish army and bidding him hasten. He arrived at last and commenced negotiations, and the Turkish officers, no

less uneasy than the English garrison, promised to wait till the appointed hour. The next day passed in mournful silence, quiet as death. At sunset on the following day, May 9, 1819, the English standard on the castle of Parga was hauled down, and after a night spent in prayer and weeping, the Christians demanded the signal of departure.

They had left their dwellings at break of day, and scattering on the shore, endeavoured to collect some relics of their country. Some filled little bags with ashes withdrawn from the funeral pile; others took handfuls of earth, while the women and children picked up pebbles which they hid in their clothing and pressed to their bosoms, as if fearing to be deprived of them. Meanwhile, the ships intended to transport them arrived, and armed English soldiers superintended the embarkation, which the Turks hailed from afar with ferocious cries. The Parganiotes were landed in Corfu, where they suffered yet more injustice. Under various pretexts the money promised them was reduced and withheld, until destitution compelled them to accept the little that was offered. Thus closed one of the most odious transactions which modern history has been compelled to record.

The satrap of Janina had arrived at the fulfilment of his wishes. In the retirement of his fairy-like palace by the lake he could enjoy voluptuous pleas-

ures to the full. But already seventy-eight years had passed over his head, and old age had laid the burden of infirmity upon him. His dreams were dreams of blood, and vainly he sought refuge in chambers glittering with gold, adorned with arabesques, decorated with costly armour and covered with the richest of Oriental carpets, remorse stood ever beside him. Through the magnificence which surrounded him there constantly passed the pale spectre of Emineh, leading onwards a vast procession of mournful phantoms, and the guilty pacha buried his face in his hands and shrieked aloud for help. Sometimes, ashamed of his weakness, he endeavoured to defy both the reproaches of his conscience and the opinion of the multitude, and sought to encounter criticism with bravado. If, by chance, he overheard some blind singer chanting in the streets the satirical verses which, faithful to the poetical and mocking genius of their ancestors, the Greeks frequently composed about him, he would order the singer to be brought, would bid him repeat his verses, and, applauding him, would relate some fresh anecdote of cruelty, saying, "Go, add that to thy tale; let thy hearers know what I can do; let them understand that I stop at nothing in order to overcome my foes! If I reproach myself with anything, it is only with the deeds I have sometimes failed to carry out."

Sometimes it was the terrors of the life after death which assailed him. The thought of eternity brought terrible visions in its train, and Ali shuddered at the prospect of Al-Sirat, that awful bridge, narrow as a spider's thread and hanging over the furnaces of Hell, which a Mussulman must cross in order to arrive at the gate of Paradise. He ceased to joke about Eblis, the Prince of Evil, and sank by degrees into profound superstition. He was surrounded by magicians and soothsayers; he consulted omens, and demanded talismans and charms from the dervishes, which he had either sewn into his garments, or suspended in the most secret parts of his palace, in order to avert evil influences. A Koran was hung about his neck as a defence against the evil eye, and frequently he removed it and knelt before it, as did Louis XI before the leaden figures of saints which adorned his hat. He ordered a complete chemical laboratory from Venice, and engaged alchemists to distil the water of immortality, by the help of which he hoped to ascend to the planets and discover the Philosopher's Stone. Not perceiving any practical result of their labours, he ordered the laboratory to be burnt and the alchemists to be hung.

Ali hated his fellow-men. He would have liked to leave no survivors, and often regretted his inability to destroy all those who would have cause to

rejoice at his death. Consequently he sought to accomplish as much harm as he could during the time which remained to him, and for no possible reason but that of hatred, he caused the arrest of both Ibrahim Pacha, who had already suffered so much at his hands, and his son, and confined them both in a dungeon purposely constructed under the grand staircase of the castle by the lake, in order that he might have the pleasure of passing over their heads each time he left his apartments or returned to them.

It was not enough for Ali merely to put to death those who displeased him, the form of punishment must be constantly varied in order to produce a fresh mode of suffering, therefore new tortures had to be constantly invented. Now it was a servant, guilty of absence without leave, who was bound to a stake in the presence of his sister, and destroyed by a cannon placed six paces off, but only loaded with powder, in order to prolong the agony; now, a Christian accused of having tried to blow up Janina by introducing mice with tinder fastened to their tails into the powder magazine, who was shut up in the cage of Ali's favourite tiger and devoured by it.

The pacha despised the human race as much as he hated it. A European having reproached him with the cruelty shown to his subjects, Ali replied—

"You do not understand the race with which I have to deal. Were I to hang a criminal on yonder tree, the sight would not deter even his own brother from stealing in the crowd at its foot. If I had an old man burnt alive, his son would steal the ashes and sell them. The rabble can be governed by fear only, and I am the one man who does it successfully."

His conduct perfectly corresponded to his ideas. One great feast-day, two gipsies devoted their lives in order to avert the evil destiny of the pacha; and, solemnly convoking on their own heads all misfortunes which might possibly befall him, cast themselves down from the palace roof. One arose with difficulty, stunned and suffering, the other remained on the ground with a broken leg. Ali gave them each forty francs and an annuity of two pounds of maize daily, and considering this sufficient, took no further trouble about them.

Every year, at Ramadan, a large sum was distributed in alms among poor women without distinction of sect. But Ali contrived to change this act of benevolence into a barbarous form of amusement.

As he possessed several palaces in Janina at a considerable distance from each other, the one at which a distribution was to take place was each day publicly announced, and when the women had waited

there for an hour or two, exposed to sun, rain or cold, as the case might be, they were suddenly informed that they must go to some other palace, at the opposite end of the town. When they got there, they usually had to wait for another hour, fortunate if they were not sent off to a third place of meeting. When the time at length arrived, an eunuch appeared, followed by Albanian soldiers armed with staves, carrying a bag of money, which he threw by handfuls right into the midst of the assembly. Then began a terrible uproar. The women rushed to catch it, upsetting each other, quarrelling, fighting, and uttering cries of terror and pain, while the Albanians, pretending to enforce order, pushed into the crowd, striking right and left with their batons. The pacha meanwhile sat at a window enjoying the spectacle, and impartially applauding all well delivered blows, no matter whence they came. During these distributions, which really benefited no one, many women were always severely hurt, and some died from the blows they had received.

Ali maintained several carriages for himself and his family, but allowed no one else to share in this prerogative. To avoid being jolted, he simply took up the pavement in Janina and the neighbouring towns, with the result that in summer one was choked by dust, and in winter could hardly get

through the mud. He rejoiced in the public inconvenience, and one day having to go out in heavy rain, he remarked to one of the officers of his escort, "How delightful to be driven through this in a carriage, while you will have the pleasure of following on horseback! You will be wet and dirty, whilst I smoke my pipe and laugh at your condition."

He could not understand why Western sovereigns should permit their subjects to enjoy the same conveniences and amusements as themselves. "If I had a theatre," he said, "I would allow no one to be present at performances except my own children; but these idiotic Christians do not know how to uphold their own dignity."

There was no end to the mystifications which it amused the pacha to carry out with those who approached him.

One day he chose to speak Turkish to a Maltese merchant who came to display some jewels. He was informed that the merchant understood only Greek and Italian. He none the less continued his discourse without allowing anyone to translate what he said into Greek. The Maltese at length lost patience, shut up his cases, and departed. Ali watched him with the utmost calm, and as he went out told him, still in Turkish, to come again the next day.

An unexpected occurence seemed, like the warning finger of Destiny, to indicate an evil omen for the pacha's future. "Misfortunes arrive in troops," says the forcible Turkish proverb, and a forerunner of disasters came to Ali Pacha.

One morning he was suddenly roused by the Sheik Yussuf, who had forced his way in, in spite of the guards. "Behold!" said he, handing Ali a letter, "Allah, who punishes the guilty, has permitted thy seraglio of Tepelen to be burnt. Thy splendid palace, thy beautiful furniture, costly stuffs, cashmeers, furs, arms, all are destroyed! And it is thy youngest and best beloved son, Salik Bey himself, whose hand kindled the flames!" So saying, Yussuf turned and departed, crying with a triumphant voice, "Fire! fire! fire!"

Ali instantly ordered his horse, and, followed by his guards, rode without drawing rein to Tepelen. As soon as he arrived at the place where his palace had formerly insulted the public misery, he hastened to examine the cellars where his treasures were deposited. All was intact, silver plate, jewels, and fifty millions of francs in gold, enclosed in a well over which he had caused a tower to be built. After this examination he ordered all the ashes to be carefully sifted in hopes of recovering the gold in the tassels and fringes of the sofas, and the silver from the plate and the armour. He next proclaimed

through the length and breadth of the land, that, being by the hand of Allah deprived of his house, and no longer possessing anything in his native town, he requested all who loved him to prove their affection by bringing help in proportion. He fixed the day of reception for each commune, and for almost each individual of any rank, however small, according to their distance from Tepelen, whither these evidences of loyalty were to be brought.

During five days Ali received these forced benevolences from all parts. He sat, covered with rags, on a shabby palm-leaf mat placed at the outer gate of his ruined palace, holding in his left hand a villainous pipe of the kind used by the lowest people, and in his right an old red cap, which he extended for the donations of the passers-by. Behind stood a Jew from Janina, charged with the office of testing each piece of gold and valuing jewels which were offered instead of money; for, in terror, each endeavoured to appear generous. No means of obtaining a rich harvest were neglected; for instance, Ali distributed secretly large sums among poor and obscure people, such as servants, mechanics, and soldiers, in order that by returning them in public they might appear to be making great sacrifices, so that richer and more distinguished persons could not, without appearing ill-disposed towards the pacha, offer only the same amount as did the

poor, but were obliged to present gifts of enormous value.

After this charity extorted from their fears, the pacha's subjects hoped to be at peace. But a new decree proclaimed throughout Albania required them to rebuild and refurnish the formidable palace of Tepelen entirely at the public expense. Ali then returned to Janina, followed by his treasure and a few women who had escaped from the flames, and whom he disposed of amongst his friends, saying that he was no longer sufficiently wealthy to maintain so many slaves.

Fate soon provided him with a second opportunity for amassing wealth. Arta, a wealthy town with a Christian population, was ravaged by the plague, and out of eight thousand inhabitants, seven thousand were swept away. Hearing this, Ali hastened to send commissioners to prepare an account of furniture and lands which the pacha claimed as being heir to his subjects. A few livid and emaciated spectres were yet to be found in the streets of Arta. In order that the inventory might be more complete, these unhappy beings were compelled to wash in the Inachus blankets, sheets, and clothes steeped in bubonic infection, while the collectors were hunting everywhere for imaginary hidden treasure. Hollow trees were sounded, walls pulled down, the most unlikely corners examined, and a

skeleton which was discovered still girt with a belt containing Venetian sequins was gathered up with the utmost care. The archons of the town were arrested and tortured in the hope of discovering buried treasure, the clue to which had disappeared along with the owners. One of these magistrates, accused of having hidden some valuable objects, was plunged up to his shoulders in a boiler full of melted lead and boiling oil. Old men, women, children, rich and poor alike, were interrogated, beaten, and compelled to abandon the last remains of their property in order to save their lives.

Having thus decimated the few inhabitants remaining to the town, it became necessary to repeople it. With this object in view, Ali's emissaries overran the villages of Thessaly, driving before them all the people they met in flocks, and compelling them to settle in Arta. These unfortunate colonists were also obliged to find money to pay the pacha for the houses they were forced to occupy.

This business being settled, Ali turned to another which had long been on his mind. We have seen how Ismail Pacho Bey escaped the assassins sent to murder him. A ship, despatched secretly from Prevesa, arrived at the place of his retreat. The captain, posing as a merchant, invited Ismail to come on board and inspect his goods. But the latter, guessing a trap, fled promptly, and for some

time all trace of him was lost. Ali, in revenge, turned his wife out of the palace at Janina which she still occupied, and placed her in a cottage, where she was obliged to earn a living by spinning. But he did not stop there, and learning after some time that Pacho Bey had sought refuge with the Nazir of Drama, who had taken him into favour, he resolved to strike a last blow, more sure and more terrible than the others. Again Ismail's lucky star saved him from the plots of his enemy. During a hunting party he encountered a kapidgi-bachi, or messenger from the sultan, who asked him where he could find the Nazir, to whom he was charged with an important communication. As kapidgi-bachis are frequently bearers of evil tidings, which it is well to ascertain at once, and as the Nazir was at some distance, Pacho Bey assumed the latter's part, and the sultan's confidential messenger informed him that he was the bearer of a firman grantd at the request of Ali Pacha of Janina.

"Ali of Tepelen? He is my friend. How can I serve him?"

"By executing the present order, sent you by the Divan, desiring you to behead a traitor, named Pacho Bey, who crept into your service a short time ago."

"Willingly! but he is not an easy man to seize, being brave, vigorous, clever, and cunning. Craft

will be necessary in this case. He may appear at any moment, and it is advisable that he should not see you. Let no one suspect who you are, but go to Drama, which is only two hours distant, and await me there. I shall return this evening, and you can consider your errand as accomplished."

The kapidgi-bachi made a sign of comprehension, and directed his course towards Drama; while Ismail, fearing that the Nazir, who had only known him a short time, would sacrifice him with the usual Turkish indifference, fled in the opposite direction. At the end of an hour he encountered a Bulgarian monk, with whom he exchanged clothes—a disguise which enabled him to traverse Upper Macedonia in safety. Arriving at the great Servian convent in the mountains whence the Axius takes its rise, he obtained admission under an assumed name. But feeling sure of the discretion of the monks, after a few days he explained his situation to them.

Ali, learning the ill-success of his latest stratagem, accused the Nazir of conniving at Pacho Bey's escape. But the latter easily justified himself with the Divan by giving precise information of what had really occurred. This was what Ali wanted, who profited thereby in having the fugitive's track followed up, and soon got wind of his retreat. As Pacho Bey's innocence had been proved in the explanations given to the Porte, the death firman

obtained against him became useless, and Ali affected to abandon him to his fate, in order the better to conceal the new plot he was conceiving against him.

Athanasius Vaya, chief assassin of the Kardikiotes, to whom Ali imparted his present plan for the destruction of Ismail, begged for the honour of putting it into execution, swearing that this time Ismail should not escape. The master and the instrument disguised their scheme under the appearance of a quarrel, which astonished the whole town. At the end of a terrible scene which took place in public, Ali drove the confidant of his crimes from the palace, overwhelming him with insults, and declaring that were Athanasius not the son of his children's foster-mother, he would have sent him to the gibbet. He enforced his words by the application of a stick, and Vaya, apparently overwhelmed by terror and affliction, went round to all the nobles of the town, vainly entreating them to intercede for him. The only favour which Mouktar Pacha could obtain for him was a sentence of exile allowing him to retreat to Macedonia.

Athanasius departed from Janina with all the demonstrations of utter despair, and continued his route with the haste of one who fears pursuit. Arrived in Macedonia, he assumed the habit of a monk, and undertook a pilgrimage to Mount Athos,

saying that both the disguise and the journey were necessary to his safety. On the way he encountered one of the itinerant friars of the great Servian convent, to whom he described his disgrace in energetic terms, begging him to obtain his admission among the lay brethren of his monastery.

Delighted at the prospect of bringing back to the fold of the Church a man so notorious for his crimes, the friar hastened to inform his superior, who in his turn lost no time in announcing to Pacho Bey that his compatriot and companion in misfortune was to be received among the lay brethren, and in relating the history of Athanasius as he himself had heard it. Pacho Bey, however, was not easily deceived, and at once guessing that Vaya's real object was his own assassination, told his doubts to the superior, who had already received him as a friend. The latter retarded the reception of Vaya so as to give Pacho time to escape and take the road to Constantinople. Once arrived there, he determined to brave the storm and encounter Ali openly.

Endowed by nature with a noble presence and with masculine firmness, Pacho Bey possessed also the valuable gift of speaking all the various tongues of the Ottoman Empire. He could not fail to distinguish himself in the capital and to find an opening for his great talents. But his inclination drove him at first to seek his fellow-exiles from Epirus, who

were either his old companions in arms, friends, or relations, for he was allied to all the principal families, and was even, through his wife, nearly connected with his enemy, Ali Pacha himself.

He had learnt what this unfortunte lady had already endured on his account, and feared that she would suffer yet more if he took active measures against the pacha. While he yet hesitated between affection and revenge, he heard that she had died of grief and misery. Now that despair had put an end to uncertainty, he set his hand to the work.

At this precise moment Heaven sent him a friend to console and aid him in his vengeance, a Christian from Œtolia, Paléopoulo by name. This man was on the point of establishing himself in Russian Bessarabia, when he met Pacho Bey and joined with him in the singular coalition which was to change the fate of the Tepelenian dynasty.

Paléopoulo reminded his companion in misfortune of a memorial presented to the Divan in 1812, which had brought upon Ali a disgrace from which he only escaped in consequence of the overwhelming political events which just then absorbed the attention of the Ottoman Government. The Grand Seigneur had sworn by the tombs of his ancestors to attend to the matter as soon as he was able, and it was only requisite to remind him of his vow. Pacho Bey and his friend drew up a new memorial,

and knowing the sultan's avarice, took care to dwell on the immense wealth possessed by Ali, on his scandalous exactions, and on the enormous sums diverted from the Imperial Treasury. By overhauling the accounts of his administration, millions might be recovered. To these financial considerations Pacho Bey added some practical ones. Speaking as a man sure of his facts and well acquainted with the ground, he pledged his head that with twenty thousand men he would, in spite of 'Ali's troops and strongholds, arrive before Janina without firing a musket.

However good these plans appeared, they were by no means to the taste of the sultan's ministers, who were each and all in receipt of large pensions from the man at whom they struck. Besides, as in Turkey it is customary for the great fortunes of Government officials to be absorbed on their death by the Imperial Treasury, it of course appeared easier to await the natural inheritance of Ali's treasures than to attempt to seize them by a war which would certainly absorb part of them. Therefore, while Pacho Bey's zeal was commended, he obtained only dilatory answers, followed at length by a formal refusal.

Meanwhile, the old Œtolian, Paléopoulo, died, having prophesied the approaching Greek insurrection among his friends, and pledged Pacho Bey

to persevere in his plans of vengeance, assuring him that before long Ali would certainly fall a victim to them. Thus left alone, Pacho, before taking any active steps in his work of vengeance, affected to give himself up to the strictest observances of the Mohammedan religion. Ali, who had established a most minute surveillance over his actions, finding that his time was spent with ulemas and dervishes, imagined that he had ceased to be dangerous, and took no further trouble about him.

CHAPTER VIII

A CAREER of successful crime had established Ali's rule over a population equal to that of the two kingdoms of Sweden and Norway. But his ambition was not yet satisfied. The occupation of Parga did not crown his desires, and the delight which it caused him was much tempered by the escape of the Parganiotes, who found in exile a safe refuge from his persecution. Scarcely had he finished the conquest of Middle Albania before he was exciting a faction against the young Moustai Pacha in Scodra, a new object of greed. He also kept an army of spies in Wallachia, Moldavia, Thrace, and Macedonia, and, thanks to them, he appeared to be everywhere present, and was mixed up in every intrigue, private or political, throughout the empire. He had paid the English agents the price agreed on for Parga, but he repaid himself five times over, by gifts extorted from his vassals, and by the value of the Parga lands, now become his property. His palace of Tepelen had been rebuilt at the public expense, and was larger and

more magnificent than before; Janina was embellished with new buildings; elegant pavilions rose on the shores of the lake; in short, Ali's luxury was on a level with his vast riches. His sons and grandsons were provided for by important positions, and Ali himself was a sovereign prince in everything but the name.

There was no lack of flattery, even from literary persons. At Vienna a poem was printed in his honour, and a French-Greek Grammar was dedicated to him, and such titles as "Most Illustrious," "Most Powerful," and "Most Clement," were showered upon him, as upon a man whose lofty virtues and great exploits echoed through the world. A native of Bergamo, learned in heraldry, provided him with a coat of arms, representing, on a field gules, a lion, embracing three cubs, emblematic of the Tepelenian dynasty. Already he had a consul at Leucadia accepted by the English, who, it is said, encouraged him to declare himself Hereditary Prince of Greece, under the nominal suzerainty of the sultan; their real intention being to use him as a tool in return for their protection, and to employ him as a political counterbalance to the hospodars of Moldavia and Wallachia, who for the last twenty years had been simply Russian agents in disguise. This was not all; many of the adventurers with whom the Levant swarms, outlaws from every

country, had found a refuge in Albania, and helped not a little to excite Ali's ambition by their suggestions. Some of these men frequently saluted him as King, a title which he affected to reject with indignation; and he disdained to imitate other states by raising a private standard of his own, preferring not to compromise his real power by puerile displays of dignity; and he lamented the foolish ambition of his children, who would ruin him, he said, by aiming, each, at becoming a vizier. Therefore he did not place his hope or confidence in them, but in the adventurers of every sort and kind, pirates, coiners, renegades, assassins, whom he kept in his pay and regarded as his best support. These he sought to attach to his person as men who might some day be found useful, for he did not allow the many favours of fortune to blind him to the real danger of his position. "A vizier," he was accustomed to say, "resembles a man wrapped in costly furs, but he sits on a barrel of powder, which only requires a spark to explode it." The Divan granted all the concessions which Ali demanded, affecting ignorance of his projects of revolt and his intelligence with the enemies of the State; but this apparent weakness was merely prudent temporising. It was considered that Ali, already advanced in years, could not live much longer, and it was hoped that, at his death, Continental Greece, now in some

measure detached from the Ottoman rule, would again fall under the sultan's sway.

Meanwhile, Pacho Bey, bent on silently undermining Ali's influence, had established himself as an intermediary for all those who came to demand justice on account of the pacha's exactions, and he contrived that both his own complaints and those of his clients should penetrate to the ears of the sultan; who, pitying his misfortunes, made him a kapidgi-bachi, as a commencement of better things. About this time the sultan also admitted to the Council a certain Abdi Effendi of Larissa, one of the richest nobles of Thessaly, who had been compelled by the tyranny of Veli Pacha to fly from his country. The two new dignitaries, having secured Khalid Effendi as a partisan, resolved to profit by his influence to carry out their plans of vengeance on the Tepelenian family. The news of Pacho Bey's promotion roused Ali from the security in which he was plunged, and he fell a prey to the most lively anxiety. Comprehending at once the evil which this man, trained in his own school, might cause him, he exclaimed, "Ah! if Heaven would only restore me the strength of my youth, I would plunge my sword into his heart even in the midst of the Divan."

It was not long before Ali's enemies found an extremely suitable opportunity for opening their

attack. Veli Pacha, who had for his own profit increased the Thessalian taxation fivefold, had in doing so caused so much oppression that many of the inhabitants preferred the griefs and dangers of emigration rather than remain under so tyrannical a rule. A great number of Greeks sought refuge at Odessa, and the great Turkish families assembled round Pacho Bey and Abdi Effendi at Constantinople, who lost no opportunity of interceding in their favour. The sultan, who as yet did not dare to act openly against the Tepelenian family, was at least able to relegate Veli to the obscure post of Lepanto, and Veli, much disgusted, was obliged to obey. He quitted the new palace he had just built at Rapehani, and betook himself to the place of exile, accompanied by actors, Bohemian dancers, bear leaders, and a crowd of prostitutes.

Thus attacked in the person of his most powerful son, Ali thought to terrify his enemies by a daring blow. He sent three Albanians to Constantinople to assassinate Pacho Bey. They fell upon him as he was proceeding to the Mosque of Saint-Sophia, on the day on which the sultan also went in order to be present at the Friday ceremonial prayer, and fired several shots at him. He was wounded, but not mortally.

The assassins, caught red-handed, were hung at the gate of the Imperial Seraglio, but not before

confessing that they were sent by the Pacha of Janina. The Divan, comprehending at last that so dangerous a man must be dealt with at any cost, recapitulated all Ali's crimes, and pronounced a sentence against him which was confirmed by a decree of the Grand Mufti. It set forth that Ali Tepelen, having many times obtained pardon for his crimes, was now guilty of high treason in the first degree, and that he would, as recalcitrant, be placed under the ban of the Empire if he did not within forty days appear at the Gilded Threshold of the Felicitous Gate of the Monarch who dispenses crowns to the princes who reign in this world, in order to justify himself. As may be supposed, submission to such an order was about the last thing Ali contemplated. As he failed to appear, the Divan caused the Grand Mufti to launch the thunder of excommunication against him.

Ali had just arrived at Parga, which he now saw for the third time since he had obtained it, when his secretaries informed him that only the rod of Moses could save him from the anger of Pharaoh—a figurative mode of warning him that he had nothing to hope for. But Ali, counting on his usual luck, persisted in imagining that he could, once again, escape from his difficulty by the help of gold and intrigue. Without discontinuing the pleasures in which he was immersed, he contened himself

with sending presents and humble petitions to Constantinople. But both were alike useless, for no one even ventured to transmit them to the sultan, who had sworn to cut off the head of anyone who dared mention the name of Ali Tepelen in his presence.

Receiving no answer to his overtures, Ali became a prey to terrible anxiety. As he one day opened the Koran to consult it as to his future, his divining rod stopped at verse 82, chap. xix., which says, "He doth flatter himself in vain. He shall appear before our tribunal naked and bare." Ali closed the book and spat three times into his bosom. He was yielding to the most dire presentiments, when a courier, arriving from the capital, informed him that all hope of pardon was lost.

He ordered his galley to be immediately prepared, and left his seraglio, casting a look of sadness on the beautiful gardens where only yesterday he had received the homage of his prostrate slaves. He bade farewell to his wives, saying that he hoped soon to return, and descended to the shore, where the rowers received him with acclamations. The sail was set to a favourable breeze, and Ali, leaving the shore he was never to see again, sailed towards Prevesa, where he hoped to meet the Lord High Commissioner Maitland. But the time of prosperity had gone by, and the regard which had once been

shown him changed with his fortunes. The interview he sought was not granted.

The sultan now ordered a fleet to be equipped, which, after Ramadan, was to disembark troops on the coast of Epirus, while all the neighbouring pachas received orders to hold themselves in readiness to march with all the troops of their respective Governments against Ali, whose name was struck out of the list of viziers. Pacho Bey was named Pacha of Janina and Delvino on condition of subduing them, and was placed in command of the whole expedition.

However, notwithstanding these orders, there was not at the beginning of April, two months after the attempted assassination of Pacho Bey, a single soldier ready to march on Albania. Ramadan, that year, did not close until the new moon of July 10. Had Ali put himself boldly at the head of the movement which was beginning to stir throughout Greece, he might have baffled these vacillating projects, and possibly dealt a fatal blow to the Ottoman Empire. As far back as 1808, the Hydriotes had offered to recognise his son Veli, then Vizier of the Morea, as their Prince, and to support him in every way, if he would proclaim the independence of the Archipelago. The Moreans bore him no enmity until he refused to help them to freedom, and would have returned to him had he consented.

On the other side, the sultan, though anxious for war, would not spend a penny in order to wage it; and it was easy to corrupt some of the great vassals ordered to march at their own expense against a man in whose downfall they had no special interest. Nor were the means of seduction wanting to Ali, whose wealth was enormous; but he preferred to keep it in order to carry on the war which he thought he could no longer escape. He made, therefore, a general appeal to all Albanian warriors, whatever their religion. Mussulmans and Christians, alike attracted by the prospect of booty and good pay, flocked to his standard in crowds.

He organised all these adventurers on the plan of the Armatolis, by companies, placing a captain of his own choice at the head of each, and giving each company a special post to defend. Of all possible plans this was the best adapted to his country, where only a guerilla warfare can be carried on, and where a large army could not subsist.

In repairing to the posts assigned to them, these troops committed such terrible depredations that the provinces sent to Constantinople demanding their suppression. The Divan answered the petitioners that it was their own business to suppress these disorders, and to induce the Klephtes to turn their arms against Ali, who had nothing to hope from the clemency of the Grand Seigneur. At the

same time circular letters were addressed to the Epirotes, warning them to abandon the cause of a rebel, and to consider the best means of freeing themselves from a traitor, who, having long oppressed them, now sought to draw down on their country all the terrors of war. Ali, who everywhere maintained numerous and active spies, now redoubled his watchfulness, and not a single letter entered Epirus without being opened and read by his agents. As an extra precaution, the guardians of the passes were enjoined to slay without mercy any despatch-bearer not provided with an order signed by Ali himself, and to send to Janina under escort any travellers wishing to enter Epirus. These measures were specially aimed against Suleyman Pacha, who had succeeded Veli in the government of Thessaly, and replaced Ali himself in the office of Grand Provost of the Highways. Suleyman's secretary was a Greek called Anagnorto, a native of Macedonia, whose estates Ali had seized, and who had fled with his family to escape further persecution. He had become attached to the court party, less for the sake of vengeance on Ali than to aid the cause of the Greeks, for whose freedom he worked by underhand methods. He persuaded Suleyman Pacha that the Greeks would help him to dethrone Ali, for whom they cherished the deepest hatred, and he was determined that they should

learn the sentence of deprivation and excommunication fulminated against the rebel pacha. He introduced into the Greek translation which he was commissioned to make, ambiguous phrases which were read by the Christians as a call to take up arms in the cause of liberty. In an instant, all Hellas was up in arms. The Mohammedans were alarmed, but the Greeks gave out that it was in order to protect themselves and their property against the bands of brigands which had appeared on all sides. This was the beginning of the Greek insurrection, and occurred in May 1820, extending from Mount Pindus to Thermopylæ. However, the Greeks, satisfied with having vindicated their right to bear arms in their own defence, continued to pay their taxes, and abstained from all hostility.

At the news of this great movement, Ali's friends advised him to turn it to his own advantage. "The Greeks in arms," said they, "want a chief: offer yourself as their leader. They hate you, it is true, but this feeling may change. It is only necessary to make them believe, which is easily done, that if they will support your cause you will embrace Christianity and give them freedom."

There was no time to lose, for matters became daily more serious. Ali hastened to summon what he called a Grand Divan, composed of the chiefs of both sects, Mussulmans and Christians. There were

assembled men of widely different types, much astonished at finding themselves in company: the venerable Gabriel, Archbishop of Janina, and uncle of the unfortunate Euphrosyne, who had been dragged thither by force; Abbas, the old head of the police, who had presided at the execution of the Christian martyr; the holy bishop of Velas, still bearing the marks of the chains with which Ali had loaded him; and Porphyro, Archbishop of Arta, to whom the turban would have been more becoming than the mitre.

Ashamed of the part he was obliged to play, Ali, after long hesitation, decided on speaking, and, addressing the Christians, "O Greeks!" he said, "examine my conduct with unprejudiced minds, and you will see manifest proofs of the confidence and consideration which I have ever shown you. What pacha has ever treated you as I have done? Who would have treated your priests and the objects of your worship with as much respect? Who else would have conceded the privileges which you enjoy? for you hold rank in my councils, and both the police and the administration of my States are in your hands. I do not, however, seek to deny the evils with which I have afflicted you; but, alas! these evils have been the result of my enforced obedience to the cruel and perfidious orders of the Sublime Porte. It is to the Porte that these wrongs

must be attributed, for if my actions be attentively regarded it will be seen that I only did harm when compelled thereto by the course of events. Interrogate my actions, they will speak more fully than a detailed apology.

"My position with regard to the Suliotes allowed no half-and-half measures. Having once broken with them, I was obliged either to drive them from my country or to exterminate them. I understood the political hatred of the Ottoman Cabinet too well not to know that it would declare war against me sooner or later, and I knew that resistance would be impossible, if on one side I had to repel the Ottoman aggression, and on the other to fight against the formidable Suliotes.

"I might say the same of the Parganiotes. You know that their town was the haunt of my enemies, and each time that I appealed to them to change their ways they answered only with insults and threats. They constantly aided the Suliotes with whom I was at war; and if at this moment they still were occupying Parga, you would see them throw open the gates of Epirus to the forces of the sultan. But all this does not prevent my being aware that my enemies blame me severely, and indeed I also blame myself, and deplore the faults which the difficulty of my position has entailed upon me. Strong in my repentance, I do not hesitate to

address myself to those whom I have most grievously wounded. Thus I have long since recalled to my service a great number of Suliotes, and those who have responded to my invitation are occupying important posts near my person. To complete the reconciliation, I have written to those who are still in exile, desiring them to return fearlessly to their country, and I have certain information that this proposal has been everywhere accepted with enthusiasm. The Suliotes will soon return to their ancestral houses, and, reunited under my standard, will join me in combating the Osmanlis, our common enemies.

"As to the avarice of which I am accused, it seems easily justified by the constant necessity I was under of satisfying the inordinate cupidity of the Ottoman ministry, which incessantly made me pay dearly for tranquillity. This was a personal affair, I acknowledge, and so also is the accumulation of treasure made in order to support the war which the Divan has at length declared."

Here Ali ceased, then having caused a barrel full of gold pieces to be emptied on the floor, he continued—

"Behold a part of the treasure I have preserved with so much care, and which has been specially obtained from the Turks, our common enemies: it is yours. I am now more than ever delighted at

being the friend of the Greeks. Their bravery is a sure earnest of victory, and we will shortly re-establish the Greek Empire, and drive the Osmanlis across the Bosphorus. O bishops and priests of Issa the prophet! bless the arms of the Christians, your children. O primates! I call upon you to defend your rights, and to rule justly the brave nation associated with my interests."

This discourse produced very different impressions on the Christian priests and archons. Some replied only by raising looks of despair to Heaven, others murmured their adhesion. A great number remained uncertain, not knowing what to decide. The Mirdite chief, he who had refused to slaughter the Kardikiotes, declared that neither he nor any Skipetar of the Latin communion would bear arms against their legitimate sovereign the sultan. But his words were drowned by cries of "Long live Ali Pacha! Long live the restorer of liberty!" uttered by some chiefs of adventurers and brigands.

CHAPTER IX

THE next day, May 24th, 1820, Ali addressed a circular letter to his brothers the Christians, announcing that in future he would consider them as his most faithful subjects, and that henceforth he remitted the taxes paid to his own family. He wound up by asking for soldiers, but the Greeks having learnt the instability of his promises, remained deaf to his invitations. At the same time he sent messengers to the Montenegrins and the Servians, inciting them to revolt, and organised insurrections in Wallachia and Moldavia to the very environs of Constantinople.

Whilst the Ottoman vassals assembled only in small numbers and very slowly under their respective standards, every day there collected round the castle of Janina whole companies of Toxidæ, of Tapazetæ, and of Chamidæ; so that Ali, knowing that Ismail Pacho Bey had boasted that he could arrive in sight of Janina without firing a gun, said in his turn that he would not treat with the Porte until he and his troops should be within eight leagues of Constantinople.

He had fortified and supplied with munitions of war Ochrida, Avlone, Cannia, Berat, Cleisoura, Premiti, the port of Panormus, Santi-Quaranta, Buthrotum, Delvino, Argyro-Castron, Tepelen, Parga, Prevesa, Sderli, Paramythia, Arta, the post of the Five Wells, Janina and its castles. These places contained four hundred and twenty cannons of all sizes, for the most part in bronze, mounted on siege-carriages, and seventy mortars. Besides these, there were in the castle by the lake, independently of the guns in position, forty field-pieces, sixty mountain guns, a number of Congreve rockets, formerly given him by the English, and an enormous quantity of munitions of war. Finally, he endeavoured to establish a line of semaphores between Janina and Prevesa, in order to have prompt news of the Turkish fleet, which was expected to appear on this coast.

Ali, whose strength seemed to increase with age, saw to everything and appeared everywhere; sometimes in a litter borne by his Albanians, sometimes in a carriage raised into a kind of platform, but it was more frequently on horseback that he appeared among his labourers. Often he sat on the bastions in the midst of the batteries, and conversed familiarly with those who surrounded him. He narrated the successes formerly obtained against the sultan by Kara Bazaklia, Vizier of Scodra, who, like him-

self, had been attained with the sentence of deprivation and excommunication; recounting how the rebel pacha, shut up in his citadel with seventy-two warriors, had seen collapse at his feet the united forces of four great provinces of the Ottoman Empire, commanded by twenty-two pachas, who were almost entirely annihilated in one day by the Guégues. He reminded them also of the brilliant victory gained by Passevend Oglon, Pacha of Widdin, of quite recent memory, which is celebrated in the warlike songs of the Klephts of Roumelia.

Almost simultaneously, Ali's sons, Mouktar and Veli, arrived at Janina. Veli had been obliged, or thought himself obliged, to evacuate Lepanto by superior forces, and brought only discouraging news, especially as to the wavering fidelity of the Turks. Mouktar, on the contrary, who had just made a tour of inspection in the Musaché, had only noticed favourable dispositions, and deluded himself with the idea that the Chaonians, who had taken up arms, had done so in order to aid his father. He was curiously mistaken, for these tribes hated Ali with a hatred all the deeper for being compelled to conceal it, and were only in arms in order to repel aggression.

The advice given by the sons to their father as to the manner of treating the Mohammedans differed widely in accordance with their respective

opinions. Consequently a violent quarrel arose between them, ostensibly on account of this dispute, but in reality on the subject of their father's inheritance, which both equally coveted. Ali had brought all his treasure to Janina, and thenceforth neither son would leave the neighbourhood of so excellent a father. They overwhelmed him with marks of affection, and vowed that the one had left Lepanto, and the other Berat, only in order to share his danger. Ali was by no means duped by these protestations, of which he divined the motive only too well, and though he had never loved his sons, he suffered cruelly in discovering that he was not beloved by them.

Soon he had other troubles to endure. One of his gunners assassinated a servant of Veli's, and Ali ordered the murderer to be punished, but when the sentence was to be carried out the whole corps of artillery mutinied. In order to save appearances, the pacha was compelled to allow them to ask for the pardon of the criminal whom he dared not punish. This incident showed him that his authority was no longer paramount, and he began to doubt the fidelity of his soldiers. The arrival of the Ottoman fleet further enlightened him to his true position. Mussulman and Christian alike, all the inhabitants of Northern Albania, who had hitherto concealed their disaffection under an exaggerated

semblance of devotion, now hastened to make their submission to the sultan. The Turks, continuing their success, laid siege to Parga, which was held by Méhémet, Veli's eldest son. He was prepared to make a good defence, but was betrayed by his troops, who opened the gates of the town, and he was compelled to surrender at discretion. He was handed over to the commander of the naval forces, by whom he was well treated, being assigned the best cabin in the admiral's ship and given a brilliant suite. He was assured that the sultan, whose only quarrel was with his grandfather, would show him favour, and would even deal mercifully with Ali, who, with his treasures, would merely be sent to an important province in Asia Minor. He was induced to write in this strain to his family and friends in order to induce them to lay down their arms.

The fall of Parga made a great impression on the Epirotes, who valued its possession far above its real importance. Ali rent his garments and cursed the days of his former good fortune, during which he had neither known how to moderate his resentment nor to foresee the possibility of any change of fortune.

The fall of Parga was succeeded by that of Arta, of Mongliana, where was situated Ali's country house, and of the post of the Five Wells. Then came a yet more overwhelming piece of news: Omar

Brionis, whom Ali, having formerly despoiled of his wealth, had none the less recently appointed general-in-chief, had gone over to the enemy with all his troops!

Ali then decided on carrying out a project he had formed in case of necessity, namely, on destroying the town of Janina, which would afford shelter to the enemy and a point of attack against the fortresses in which he was entrenched. When this resolution was known, the inhabitants thought only of saving themselves and their property from the ruin from which nothing could save their country. But most of them were only preparing to depart, when Ali gave leave to the Albanian soldiers yet faithful to him to sack the town.

The place was immediately invaded by an unbridled soldiery. The Metropolitan church, where Greeks and Turks alike deposited their gold, jewels, and merchandise, even as did the Greeks of old in the temples of the gods, became the first object of pillage. Nothing was respected. The cupboards containing sacred vestments were broken open, so were the tombs of the archbishops, in which were interred reliquaries adorned with precious stones; and the altar itself was defiled with the blood of ruffians who fought for chalices and silver crosses.

The town presented an equally terrible spectacle; neither Christians nor Mussulmans were spared,

and the women's apartments, forcibly entered, were given up to violence. Some of the more courageous citizens endeavoured to defend their houses and families against these bandits, and the clash of arms mingled with cries and groans. All at once the roar of a terrible explosion rose above the other sounds, and a hail of bombs, shells, grenades, and rockets carried devastation and fire into the different quarters of the town, which soon presented the spectacle of an immense conflagration. Ali, seated on the great platform of the castle by the lake, which seemed to vomit fire like a volcano, directed the bombardment, pointing out the places which must be burnt. Churches, mosques, libraries, bazaars, houses, all were destroyed, and the only thing spared by the flames was the gallows, which remained standing in the midst of the ruins.

Of the thirty thousand persons who inhabited Janina a few hours previously, perhaps one half had escaped. But these had not fled many leagues before they encountered the outposts of the Ottoman army, which, instead of helping or protecting them, fell upon them, plundered them, and drove them towards the camp, where slavery awaited them. The unhappy fugitives, taken thus between fire and sword, death behind and slavery before, uttered a terrible cry, and fled in all directions. Those who escaped the Turks were stopped in the

hill passes by the mountaineers rushing down to the prey; only large numbers who held together could force a passage.

In some cases terror bestows extraordinary strength, there were mothers who, with infants at the breast, covered on foot in one day the fourteen leagues which separate Janina from Arta. But others, seized with the pangs of travail in the midst of their flight, expired in the woods, after giving birth to babes, who, destitute of succour, did not survive their mothers. And young girls, having disfigured themselves by gashes, hid themselves in caves, where they died of terror and hunger.

The Albanians, intoxicated with plunder and debauchery, refused to return to the castle, and only thought of regaining their country and enjoying the fruit of their rapine. But they were assailed on the way by peasants covetous of their booty, and by those of Janina who had sought refuge with them. The roads and passes were strewn with corpses, and the trees by the roadside converted into gibbets. The murderers did not long survive their victims.

The ruins of Janina were still smoking when, on the 19th August, Pacho Bey made his entry. Having pitched his tent out of range of Ali's cannon, he proclaimed aloud the firman which inaugurated him as Pacha of Janina and Delvino, and then

raised the tails, emblem of his dignity. Ali heard on the summit of his keep the acclamations of the Turks who saluted Pacho Bey, his former servant, with the titles of Vali of Epirus, and Ghazi, or Victorius. After this ceremony, the cadi read the sentence, confirmed by the Mufti, which declared Ali Tepelen Veli-Zadé to have forfeited his dignities and to be excommunicated, adding an injunction to all the faithful that henceforth his name was not to be pronounced except with the addition of "Kara," or "black," which is bestowed on those cut off from the congregation of Sunnites, or Orthodox Mohammedans. A Marabout then cast a stone towards the castle, and the anathema upon "Kara Ali" was repeated by the whole Turkish army, ending with the cry of "Long live the sultan! So be it!"

But it was not by ecclesiastical thunders that three fortresses could be reduced, which were defended by artillerymen drawn from different European armies, who had established an excellent school for gunners and bombardiers. The besieged, having replied with hootings of contempt to the acclamations of the besiegers, proceeded to enforce their scorn with well-aimed cannon shots, while the rebel flotilla, dressed as if for a fête-day, passed slowly before the Turks, saluting them with cannon-shot if they ventured near the edge of the lake.

This noisy rhodomontade did not prevent Ali from being consumed with grief and anxiety. The sight of his own troops, now in the camp of Pacho Bey, the fear of being for ever separated from his sons, the thought of his grandson in the enemy's hands, all threw him into the deepest melancholy, and his sleepless eyes were constantly drowned in tears. He refused his food, and sat for seven days with untrimmed beard, clad in mourning, on a mat at the door of his antechamber, extending his hands to his soldiers, and imploring them to slay him rather than abandon him. His wives, seeing him in this state, and concluding all was lost, filled the air with their lamentations. All began to think that grief would bring Ali to the grave; but his soldiers, to whose protestations he at first refused any credit, represented to him that their fate was indissolubly linked with his. Pacho Bey having proclaimed that all taken in arms for Ali would be shot as sharers in rebellion, it was therefore their interest to support his resistance with all their power. They also pointed out that the campaign was already advanced, and that the Turkish army, which had forgotten its siege artillery at Constantinople, could not possibly procure any before the end of October, by which time the rains would begin, and the enemy would probably be short of food. Moreover, in any case, it being impossible to winter in a ruined

town, the foe would be driven to seek shelter at a distance.

These representations, made with warmth and conviction, and supported by evidence, began to soothe the restless fever which was wasting Ali, and the gentle caresses and persuasions of Basillissa, the beautiful Christian captive, who had now been his wife for some time, completed the cure.

At the same time his sister Chaïnitza gave him an astonishing example of courage. She had persisted, in spite of all that could be said, in residing in her castle of Libokovo. The population, whom she had cruelly oppressed, demanded her death, but no one dared attack her. Superstition declared that the spirit of her mother, with whom she kept up a mysterious communication even beyond the portals of the grave, watched over her safety. The menacing form of Kamco had, it was said, appeared to several inhabitants of Tepelen, brandishing bones of the wretched Kardikiotes, and demanding fresh victims with loud cries. The desire of vengeance had urged some to brave these unknown dangers, and twice, a warrior, clothed in black, had warned them back, forbidding them to lay hands on a sacrilegious woman, whose punishment Heaven reserved to itself, and twice they had returned upon their footsteps.

But soon, ashamed of their terror, they attempted

another attack, and came attired in the colour of the Prophet. This time no mysterious stranger appeared to forbid their passage and with a cry of joy they climbed the mountain, listening for any supernatural warning. Nothing disturbed the silence and solitude save the bleating of flocks and the cries of birds of prey. Arrived on the platform of Libokovo, they prepared in silence to surprise the guards, believing the castle full of them. They approached crawling, like hunters who stalk a deer, already they had reached the gate of the enclosure, and prepared to burst it open, when lo! it opened of itself, and they beheld Chaïnitza standing before them, a carabine in her hand, pistols in her belt, and, for all guard, two large dogs.

"Halt! ye daring ones," she cried; "neither my life nor my treasure will ever be at your mercy. Let one of you move a step without my permission, and this place and the ground beneath your feet will engulf you. Ten thousand pounds of powder are in these cellars. I will, however, grant your pardon, unworthy though you are. I will even allow you to take these sacks filled with gold; they may recompense you for the losses which my brother's enemies have recently inflicted on you. But depart this instant without a word, and dare not to trouble me again; I have other means of destruction at command besides gunpowder. Life

is nothing to me, remember that; but your mountains may yet at my command become the tomb of your wives and children. Go!"

She ceased, and her would-be murderers fled in terror.

Shortly after the plague broke out in these mountains, Chaïnitza had distributed infected garments among gipsies, who scattered contagion wherever they went.

"We are indeed of the same blood!" cried Ali with pride, when he heard of his sister's conduct; and from that hour he appeared to regain all the fire and audacity of his youth. When, a few days later, he was informed that Mouktar and Veli, seduced by the brilliant promises of Pacho Bey, had surrendered Prevesa and Argyro-Castron, "It does not surprise me," he observed coldly. "I have long known them to be unworthy of being my sons, and henceforth my only children and heirs are those who defend my cause." And on hearing a report that both had been beheaded by Pacho Bey's order, he contented himself with saying, "They betrayed their father, and have only received their deserts; speak no more of them." And to show how little it discouraged him, he redoubled his fire upon the Turks.

But the latter, who had at length obtained some artillery, answered his fire with vigour, and began

really to discrown the old pacha's fortress. Feeling that the danger was pressing, Ali redoubled both his prudence and activity. His immense treasures were the real reason of the war waged against him, and these might induce his own soldiers to rebel, in order to become masters of them. He resolved to protect them from either surprise or conquest. The sum necessary for present use was deposited in the powder magazine, so that, if driven to extremity, it might be destroyed in a moment; the remainder was enclosed in strong-boxes, and sunk in different parts of the lake. This labour lasted a fortnight, when, finally, Ali put to death the gipsies who had been employed about it, in order that the secret might remain with himself.

While he thus set his own affairs in order, he applied himself to the troubling those of his adversary. A great number of Suliots had joined the Ottoman army in order to assist in the destruction of him who formerly had ruined their country. Their camp, which for a long time had enjoyed immunity from the guns of Janina, was one day overwhelmed with bombs. The Suliots were terrified, until they remarked that the bombs did not burst. They then, much astonished, proceeded to pick up and examine these projectiles. Instead of a match, they found rolls of paper enclosed in a wooden cylinder, on which was engraved these

words, "Open carefully." The paper contained a truly Macchiavellian letter from Ali, which began by saying that they were quite justified in having taken up arms against him, and added that he now sent them a part of the pay of which the traitorous Ismail was defrauding them, and that the bombs thrown into their cantonment contained six thousand sequins in gold. He begged them to amuse Ismail by complaints and recriminations, while his gondola should by night fetch one of them, to whom he would communicate what more he had to say. If they accepted his proposition, they were to light three fires as a signal.

The signal was not long in appearing. Ali despatched his barge, which took on board a monk, the spiritual chief of the Suliots. He was clothed in sackcloth, and repeated the prayers for the dying, as one going to execution. Ali, however, received him with the utmost cordiality. He assured the priest of his repentance, his good intentions, his esteem for the Greek captains, and then gave him a paper which startled him considerably. It was a despatch, intercepted by Ali, from Khalid Effendi to the Seraskier Ismail, ordering the latter to exterminate all Christians capable of bearing arms. All male children were to be circumcised, and brought up to form a legion drilled in European fashion; and the letter went on to explain how the Suliots,

the Armatolis, the Greek races of the mainland and those of the Archipelago should be disposed of. Seeing the effect produced on the monk by the perusal of this paper, Ali hastened to make him the most advantageous offers, declaring that his own wish was to give Greece a political existence, and only requiring that the Suliot captains should send him a certain number of their children as hostages. He then had cloaks and arms brought which he presented to the monk, dismissing him in haste, in order that darkness might favour his return.

The next day Ali was resting, with his head on Basilissa's lap, when he was informed that the enemy was advancing upon the intrenchments which had been raised in the midst of the ruins of Janina. Already the outposts had been forced, and the fury of the assailants threatened to triumph over all obstacles. Ali immediately ordered a sortie of all his troops, announcing that he himself would conduct it. His master of the horse brought him the famous Arab charger called the Dervish, his chief huntsman presented him with his guns, weapons still famous in Epirus, where they figure in the ballads of the Skipetars. The first was an enormous gun, of Versailles manufacture, formerly presented by the conqueror of the Pyramids to Djezzar, the Pacha of St.-Jean-d'Arc, who amused himself by enclosing living victims in the walls of his palace,

in order that he might hear their groans in the midst of his festivities. Next came a carabine given to the Pacha of Janina in the name of Napoleon in 1806; then the battle musket of Charles XII of Sweden, and finally the much revered sabre of Krim-Guérai. The signal was given; the drawbridge crossed; the Guégues and other adventurers uttered a terrific shout; to which the cries of the assailants replied. Ali placed himself on a height, whence his eagle eye sought to discern the hostile chiefs; but he called and defied Pacho Bey in vain. Perceiving Hassan-Stamboul, colonel of the Imperial bombardiers outside his battery, Ali demanded the gun of Djezzar, and laid him dead on the spot. He then took the carabine of Napoleon, and shot with it Kékriman, Bey of Sponga, whom he had formerly appointed Pacha of Lepanto. The enemy now became aware of his presence, and sent a lively fusillade in his direction; but the balls seemed to diverge from his person. As soon as the smoke cleared, he perceived Capelan, Pacha of Croie, who had been his guest, and wounded him mortally in the chest. Capelan uttered a sharp cry, and his terrified horse caused disorder in the ranks. Ali picked off a large number of officers, one after another; every shot was mortal, and his enemies began to regard him in the light of a destroying angel. Disorder spread through the forces of the

Seraskier, who retreated hastily to his intrenchments.

The Suliots meanwhile sent a deputation to Ismail offering their submission, and seeking to regain their country in a peaceful manner; but, being received by him with the most humiliating contempt, they resolved to make common cause with Ali. They hesitated over the demand for hostages, and at length required Ali's grandson, Hussien Pacha, in exchange. After many difficulties, Ali at length consented, and the agreement was concluded. The Suliots received five hundred thousand piastres and a hundred and fifty charges of ammunition, Hussien Pacha was given up to them, and they left the Ottoman camp at dead of night. Morco Botzaris remained with three hundred and twenty men, threw down the palisades, and then ascending Mount Paktoras with his troops, waited for dawn in order to announce his defection to the Turkish army. As soon as the sun appeared he ordered a general salvo of artillery and shouted his war-cry. A few Turks in charge of an outpost were slain, the rest fled. A cry of "To arms" was raised, and the standard of the Cross floated before the camp of the infidels.

Signs and omens of a coming general insurrection appeared on all sides; there was no lack of prodigies, visions, or popular rumours, and the Mohammedans became possessed with the idea that

the last hour of their rule in Greece had struck. Ali Pacha favoured the general demoralisation; and his agents, scattered throughout the land, fanned the flame of revolt. Ismail Pacha was deprived of his title of Seraskier, and superseded by Kursheed Pacha. As soon as Ali heard this, he sent a messenger to Kursheed, hoping to influence him in his favour. Ismail, distrusting the Skipetars, who formed part of his troops, demanded hostages from them. The Skipetars were indignant, and Ali hearing of their discontent, wrote inviting them to return to him, and endeavouring to dazzle them by the most brilliant promises. These overtures were received by the offended troops with enthusiasm, and Alexis Noutza, Ali's former general, who had forsaken him for Ismail, but who had secretly returned to his allegiance and acted as a spy on the Imperial army, was deputed to treat with him. As soon as he arrived, Ali began to enact a comedy in the intention of rebutting the accusation of incest with his daughter-in-law Zobeide; for this charge, which, since Veli himself had revealed the secret of their common shame, could only be met by vague denials, had never ceased to produce a most unfavourable impression on Noutza's mind. Scarcely had he entered the castle by the lake, when Ali rushed to meet him, and flung himself into his arms. In presence of his officers and the garrison,

he loaded him with the most tender names, calling him his son, his beloved Alexis, his own legitimate child, even as Salik Pacha. He burst into tears, and, with terrible oaths, called Heaven to witness that Mouktar and Veli, whom he disavowed on account of their cowardice, were the adulterous offspring of Emineh's amours. Then, raising his hand against the tomb of her whom he had loved so much, he drew the stupefied Noutza into the recess of a casemate, and sending for Basilissa, presented him to her as a beloved son, whom only political considerations had compelled him to keep at a distance, because, being born of a Christian mother, he had been brought up in the faith of Jesus.

Having thus softened the suspicions of his soldiers, Ali resumed his underground intrigues. The Suliots had informed him that the sultan had made them extremely advantageous offers if they would return to his service, and they demanded pressingly that Ali should give up to them the citadel of Kiapha, which was still in his possession, and which commanded Suli. He replied with the information that he intended, January 26, to attack the camp of Pacho Bey early in the morning, and requested their assistance. In order to cause a diversion, they were to descend into the valley of Janina at night, and occupy a position which he

pointed out to them, and he gave them the word "flouri" as password for the night. If successful, he undertook to grant their request.

Ali's letter was intercepted, and fell into Ismail's hands, who immediately conceived a plan for snaring his enemy in his own toils. When the night fixed by Ali arrived, the Seraskier marched out a strong division under the command of Omar Brionis, who had been recently appointed Pacha, and who was instructed to proceed along the western slope of Mount Paktoras as far as the village of Besdoune, where he was to place an outpost, and then to retire along the other side of the mountain, so that, being visible in the starlight, the sentinels placed to watch on the hostile towers might take his men for the Suliots and report to Ali that the position of Saint-Nicolas, assigned to them, had been occupied as arranged. All preparations for battle were made, and the two mortal enemies, Ismail and Ali, retired to rest, each cherishing the darling hope of shortly annihilating his rival.

At break of day a lively cannonade, proceeding from the castle of the lake and from Lithoritza, announced that the besieged intended a sortie. Soon Ali's Skipetars, preceded by a detachment of French, Italians, and Swiss, rushed through the Ottoman fire and carried the first redoubt, held by Ibrahim-Aga-Stamboul. They found six pieces of

cannon, which the Turks, notwithstanding their terror, had had time to spike. This misadventure, for they had hoped to turn the artillery against the intrenched camp, decided Ali's men on attacking the second redoubt, commanded by the chief bombardier. The Asiatic troops of Baltadgi Pacha rushed to its defence. At their head appeared the chief Imaun of the army, mounted on a richly caparisoned mule and repeating the curse fulminated by the mufti against Ali, his adherents, his castles, and even his cannons, which it was supposed might be rendered harmless by these adjurations. Ali's Mohammedan Skipetars averted their eyes, and spat into their bosoms, hoping thus to escape the evil influence. A superstitious terror was beginning to spread among them, when a French adventurer took aim at the Imaun and brought him down, amid the acclamations of the soldiers; whereupon the Asiatics, imagining that Eblis himself fought against them, retired within the intrenchments, whither the Skipetars, no longer fearing the curse, pursued them vigorously.

At the same time, however, a very different action was proceeding at the northern end of the besiegers' intrenchments. Ali left his castle of the lake, preceded by twelve torch-bearers carrying braziers filled with lighted pitch-wood, and advanced towards the shore of Saint-Nicolas, expect-

ing to unite with the Suliots. He stopped in the middle of the ruins to wait for sunrise, and while there heard that his troops had carried the battery of Ibrahim-Aga-Stamboul. Overjoyed, he ordered them to press on to the second intrenchment, promising that in an hour, when he should have been joined by the Suliots, he would support them, and he then pushed forward, preceded by two field-pieces with their waggons, and followed by fifteen hundred men, as far as a large plateau on which he perceived at a little distance an encampment which he supposed to be that of the Suliots. He then ordered the Mirdite prince, Kyr Lekos, to advance with an escort of twenty-five men, and when within hearing distance to wave a blue flag and call out the password. An Imperial officer replied with the countersign "flouri," and Lekos immediately sent back word to Ali to advance. His orderly hastened back, and the prince entered the camp, where he and his escort were immediately surrounded and slain.

On receiving the message, Ali began to advance, but cautiously, being uneasy at seeing no signs of the Mirdite troop. Suddenly, furious cries, and a lively fusillade, proceeding from the vineyards and thickets, announced that he had fallen into a trap, and at the same moment Omar Pacha fell upon his advance guard, which broke, crying "Treason!"

Ali sabred the fugitives mercilessly, but fear carried them away, and, forced to follow the crowd, he perceived the Kersales and Baltadgi Pacha descending the side of Mount Paktoras, intending to cut off his retreat. He attempted another route, hastening towards the road to Dgèleva, but found it held by the Tapagetæ under the Bimbashi Aslon of Argyro-Castron. He was surrounded, all seemed lost, and feeling that his last hour had come, he thought only of selling his life as dearly as possible. Collecting his bravest soldiers round him, he prepared for a last rush on Omar Pacha; when, suddenly, with an inspiration born of despair, he ordered his ammunition waggons to be blown up. The Kersales, who were about to seize them, vanished in the explosion, which scattered a hail of stones and débris far and wide. Under cover of the smoke and general confusion, Ali succeeded in withdrawing his men to the shelter of the guns of his castle of Litharitza, where he continued the fight in order to give time to the fugitives to rally, and to give the support he had promised to those fighting on the other slope; who, in the meantime, had carried the second battery and were attacking the fortified camp. Here the Seraskier Ismail met them with a resistance so well managed, that he was able to conceal the attack he was preparing to make on their rear. Ali, guessing that the object of Ismail's

manœuvres was to crush those whom he had promised to help, and unable, on account of the distance, either to support or to warn them, endeavoured to impede Omar Pacha, hoping still that his Skipetars might either see or hear him. He encouraged the fugitives, who recognised him from afar by his scarlet dolman, by the dazzling whiteness of his horse, and by the terrible cries which he uttered; for, in the heat of battle, this extraordinary man appeared to have regained the vigour and audacity of his youth. Twenty times he led his soldiers to the charge, and as often was forced to recoil towards his castles. He brought up his reserves, but in vain. Fate had declared against him. His troops which were attacking the intrenched camp found themselves taken between two fires, and he could not help them. Foaming with passion, he threatened to rush singly into the midst of his enemies. His officers besought him to calm himself, and, receiving only refusals, at last threatened to lay hands upon him if he persisted in exposing himself like a private soldier. Subdued by this unaccustomed opposition, Ali allowed himself to be forced back into the castle by the lake, while his soldiers dispersed in various directions.

But even this defeat did not discourage the fierce pacha. Reduced to extremity, he yet entertained the hope of shaking the Ottoman Empire, and

from the recesses of his fortress he agitated the whole of Greece. The insurrection which he had stirred up, without foreseeing what the results might be, was spreading with the rapidity of a lighted train of powder, and the Mohammedans were beginning to tremble, when at length Kursheed Pacha, having crossed the Pindus at the head of an army of eighty thousand men, arrived before Janina.

His tent had hardly been pitched, when Ali caused a salute of twenty-one guns to be fired in his honour, and sent a messenger, bearing a letter of congratulation on his safe arrival. This letter, artful and insinuating, was calculated to make a deep impression on Kursheed. Ali wrote that, being driven by the infamous lies of a former servant, called Pacho Bey, into resisting, not indeed the authority of the sultan, before whom he humbly bent his head weighed down with years and grief, but the perfidious plots of His Highness's advisers, he considered himself happy in his misfortunes to have dealings with a vizier noted for his lofty qualities. He then added that these rare merits had doubtless been very far from being estimated at their proper value by a Divan in which men were only classed in accordance with the sums they laid out in gratifying the rapacity of the ministers. Otherwise, how came it about that Kursheed Pacha,

Viceroy of Egypt after the departure of the French, the conqueror of the Mamelukes, was only rewarded for these services by being recalled without a reason? Having been twice Romili-Valicy, why, when he should have enjoyed the reward of his labours, was he relegated to the obscure post of Salonica? And, when appointed Grand Vizier and sent to pacify Servia, instead of being entrusted with the government of this kingdom which he had reconquered for the sultan, why was he hastily despatched to Aleppo to repress a trifling sedition of emirs and janissaries? Now, scarcely arrived in the Morea, his powerful arm was to be employed against an aged man.

Ali then plunged into details, related the pillaging, avarice, and imperious dealing of Pacho Bey, as well as of the pachas subordinate to him; how they had alienated the public mind, how they had succeeded in offending the Armatolis, and especially the Suliots, who might be brought back to their duty with less trouble than these imprudent chiefs had taken to estrange them. He gave a mass of special information on this subject, and explained that in advising the Suliots to retire to their mountains he had really only put them in a false position as long as he retained possession of the fort of Kiapha, which is the key of the Selleide.

The Seraskier replied in a friendly manner,

ordered the military salute to be returned in Ali's honour, shot for shot, and forbade that henceforth a person of the valour and intrepidity of the Lion of Tepelen should be described by the epithet of "excommunicated." He also spoke of him by his title of "vizier," which he declared he had never forfeited the right to use; and he also stated that he had only entered Epirus as a peace-maker. Kursheed's emissaries had just seized some letters sent by Prince Alexander Ypsilanti to the Greek captains at Epirus. Without going into details of the events which led to the Greek insurrection, the prince advised the Polemarchs, chiefs of the Selleid, to aid Ali Pacha in his revolt against the Porte, but to so arrange matters that they could easily detach themselves again, their only aim being to seize his treasures, which might be used to procure the freedom of Greece.

These letters a messenger from Kursheed delivered to Ali. They produced such an impression upon his mind that he secretly resolved only to make use of the Greeks, and to sacrifice them to his own designs, if he could not inflict a terrible vengeance on their perfidy. He heard from the messenger at the same time of the agitation in European Turkey, the hopes of the Christians, and the apprehension of a rupture between the Porte and Russia. It was necessary to lay aside vain resentment and to unite

against these threatening dangers. Kursheed Pacha was, said his messenger, ready to consider favourably any propositions likely to lead to a prompt pacification, and would value such a result far more highly than the glory of subduing by means of the imposing force at his command, a valiant prince whom he had always regarded as one of the strongest bulwarks of the Ottoman Empire. This information produced a different effect upon Ali to that intended by the Seraskier. Passing suddenly from the depth of despondency to the height of pride, he imagined that these overtures of reconciliation were only a proof of the inability of his foes to subdue him, and he sent the following propositions to Kursheed Pacha:—

"If the first duty of a prince is to do justice, that of his subjects is to remain faithful, and obey him in all things. From this principle we derive that of rewards and punishments, and although my services might sufficiently justify my conduct to all time, I nevertheless acknowledge that I have deserved the wrath of the sultan, since he has raised the arm of his anger against the head of his slave. Having humbly implored his pardon, I fear not to invoke his severity towards those who have abused his confidence. With this object I offer—First, to pay the expenses of the war and the tribute in

arrears due from my Government without delay. Secondly, as it is important for the sake of example that the treason of an inferior towards his superior should receive fitting chastisement, I demand that Pacho Bey, formerly in my service, should be beheaded, he being the real rebel, and the cause of the public calamities which are afflicting the faithful of Islam. Thirdly, I require that for the rest of my life I shall retain, without annual re-investiture, my pachalik of Janina, the coast of Epirus, Acarnania and its dependencies, subject to the rights, charges and tribute due now and hereafter to the sultan. Fourthly, I demand amnesty and oblivion of the past for all those who have served me until now. And if these conditions are not accepted without modifications, I am prepared to defend myself to the last.

"Given at the castle of Janina, March 7, 1821."

CHAPTER X

THIS mixture of arrogance and submission only merited indignation, but it suited Kursheed to dissemble. He replied that, assenting to such propositions being beyond his powers, he would transmit them to Constantinople, and that hostilities might be suspended, if Ali wished, until the courier could return.

Being quite as cunning as Ali himself, Kursheed profited by the truce to carry on intrigues against him. He corrupted one of the chiefs of the garrison, Metzo-Abbas by name, who obtained pardon for himself and fifty followers, with permission to return to their homes. But this clemency appeared to have seduced also four hundred Skipetars who made use of the amnesty and the money with which Ali provided them, to raise Toxis and the Tapygetæ in the latter's favour. Thus the Seraskier's scheme turned against himself, and he perceived he had been deceived by Ali's seeming apathy, which certainly did not mean dread of defection. In fact, no man worth anything could have abandoned him, supported as he seemed to be by almost supernatural

courage. Suffering from a violent attack of gout, a malady he had never before experienced, the pacha, at the age of eighty-one, was daily carried to the most exposed place on the ramparts of his castle. There, facing the hostile batteries, he gave audience to whoever wished to see him. On this exposed platform he held his councils, despatched orders, and indicated to what points his guns should be directed. Illumined by the flashes of fire, his figure assumed fantastic and weird shapes. The balls sung in the air, the bullets hailed around him, the noise drew blood from the ears of those with him. Calm and immovable, he gave signals to the soldiers who were still occupying part of the ruins of Janina, and encouraged them by voice and gesture. Observing the enemy's movements by the help of a telescope, he improvised means of counteracting them. Sometimes he amused himself by greeting curious persons and new-comers after a fashion of his own. Thus, the chancellor of the French Consul at Prevesa, sent as an envoy to Kursheed Pacha, had scarcely entered the lodging assigned to him, when he was visited by a bomb which caused him to leave it again with all haste. This greeting was due to Ali's chief engineer, Caretto, who next day sent a whole shower of balls and shells into the midst of a group of Frenchmen, whose curiosity had brought them to Tika, where

Kursheed was forming a battery. "It is time," said Ali, "that these contemptible gossip-mongers should find listening at doors may become uncomfortable. I have furnished matter enough for them to talk about. Frangistan (Christendom) shall henceforth hear only of my triumph or my fall, which will leave it considerable trouble to pacify." Then, after a moment's silence, he ordered the public criers to inform his soldiers of the insurrections in Wallachia and the Morea, which news, proclaimed from the ramparts, and spreading immediately in the Imperial camp, caused there much dejection.

The Greeks were now everywhere proclaiming their independence, and Kursheed found himself unexpectedly surrounded by enemies. His position threatened to become worse if the siege of Janina dragged on much longer. He seized the island in the middle of the lake, and threw up redoubts upon it, whence he kept up an incessant fire on the southern front of the castle of Litharitza, and a practicable trench of nearly forty feet having been made, an assault was decided on. The troops marched out boldly, and performed prodigies of valour; but at the end of an hour, Ali, carried on a litter because of his gout, having led a sortie, the besiegers were compelled to give way and retire to their intrenchments, leaving three hundred dead at the foot of

the rampart. "The Pindian bear is yet alive," said Ali in a message to Kursheed; "thou mayest take thy dead and bury them; I give them up without ransom, and as I shall always do when thou attackest me as a brave man ought." Then, having entered his fortress amid the acclamations of his soldiers, he remarked on hearing of the general rising of Greece and the Archipelago, "It is enough! two men have ruined Turkey!" He then remained silent, and vouchsafed no explanation of this prophetic sentence.

Ali did not on this occasion manifest his usual delight on having gained a success. As soon as he was alone with Basilissa, he informed her with tears of the death of Chaïnitza. A sudden apoplexy had stricken this beloved sister, the life of his councils, in her palace of Libokovo, where she remained undisturbed until her death. She owed this special favour to her riches and to the intercession of her nephew, Djiladin Pacha of Ochcrida, who was reserved by fate to perform the funeral obsequies of the guilty race of Tepelen.

A few months afterwards, Ibrahim Pacha of Berat died of poison, being the last victim whom Chaïnitza had demanded from her brother.

Ali's position was becoming daily more difficult, when the time of Ramadan arrived, during which the Turks relax hostilities, and a species of truce

ensued. Ali himself appeared to respect the old popular customs, and allowed his Mohammedan soldiers to visit the enemy's outposts and confer on the subject of various religious ceremonies. Discipline was relaxed in Kursheed's camp, and Ali profited thereby to ascertain the smallest details of all that passed.

He learned from his spies that the general's staff, counting on the "Truce of God," a tacit suspension of all hostilities during the feast of Bairam, the Mohammedan Easter, intended to repair to the chief mosque, in the quarter of Loutcha. This building, spared by the bombs, had until now been respected by both sides. Ali, according to reports spread by himself, was supposed to be ill, weakened by fasting, and terrified into a renewal of devotion, and not likely to give trouble on so sacred a day. Nevertheless he ordered Caretto to turn thirty guns against the mosque, cannon, mortars and howitzers, intending, he said, to solemnise Bairam by discharges of artillery. As soon as he was sure that the whole of the staff had entered the mosque, he gave the signal.

Instantly, from the assembled thirty pieces, there issued a storm of shells, grenades and cannon-balls. With a terrific noise, the mosque crumbled together, amid the cries of pain and rage of the crowd inside crushed in the ruins. At the end of a quarter of

an hour the wind dispersed the smoke, and disclosed a burning crater, with the large cypresses which surrounded the building blazing as if they had been torches lighted for the funeral ceremonies of sixty captains and two hundred soldiers.

"Ali Pacha is yet alive!" cried the old Homeric hero of Janina, leaping with joy; and his words, passing from mouth to mouth, spread yet more terror amid Kursheed's soldiers, already overwhelmed by the horrible spectacle passing before their eyes.

Almost on the same day, Ali from the height of his keep beheld the standard of the Cross waving in the distance. The rebellious Greeks were bent on attacking Kursheed. The insurrection promoted by the Vizier of Janina had passed far beyond the point he intended, and the rising had become a revolution. The delight which Ali first evinced cooled rapidly before this consideration, and was extinguished in grief when he found that a conflagration, caused by the besiegers' fire, had consumed part of his store in the castle by the lake. Kursheed, thinking that this event must have shaken the old lion's resolution, recommenced negotiations, choosing the Kiaïa of Moustaï Pacha as an envoy, who gave Ali a remarkable warning. "Reflect," said he, "that these rebels bear the sign of the Cross on their standards. You are now only an instrument in their hands. Beware lest you become the victim of their

policy." Ali understood the danger, and had the sultan been better advised, he would have pardoned Ali on condition of again bringing Hellas under his iron yoke. It is possible that the Greeks might not have prevailed against an enemy so formidable and a brain so fertile in intrigue. But so simple an idea was far beyond the united intellect of the Divan, which never rose above idle display. As soon as these negotiations had commenced, Kursheed filled the roads with his couriers, sending often two in a day to Constantinople, from whence as many were sent to him. This state of things lasted more than three weeks, when it became known that Ali, who had made good use of his time in replacing the stores lost in the conflagration, buying actually from the Kiaïa himself a part of the provisions brought by him for the Imperial camp, refused to accept the Ottoman ultimatum. Troubles which broke out at the moment of the rupture of the negotiations proved that he foresaw the probable result.

Kursheed was recompensed for the deception by which he had been duped by the reduction of the fortress of Litharitza. The Guégue Skipetars, who composed the garrison, badly paid, wearied out by the long siege, and won by the Seraskier's bribes, took advantage of the fact that the time of their engagement with Ali had elapsed some months pre-

viously, and delivering up the fortress they defended, passed over to the enemy. Henceforth Ali's force consisted of only six hundred men.

It was to be feared that this handful of men might also become a prey to discouragement, and might surrender their chief to an enemy who had received all fugitives with kindness. The Greek insurgents dreaded such an event, which would have turned all Kursheed's army, hitherto detained before the castle of Janina, loose upon themselves. Therefore they hastened to send to their former enemy, now their ally, assistance which he declined to accept. Ali saw himself surrounded by enemies thirsting for his wealth, and his avarice increasing with the danger, he had for some months past refused to pay his defenders. He contented himself with informing his captains of the insurgents' offer, and telling them that he was confident that bravery such as theirs required no reinforcement. And when some of them besought him to at least receive two or three hundred Palikars into the castle, "No," said he; "old serpents always remain old serpents: I distrust the Suliots and their friendship."

Ignorant of Ali's decision, the Greeks of the Selleid were advancing, as well as the Toxidæ, towards Janina, when they received the following letter from Ali Pacha:—

"My well-beloved children, I have just learned that you are preparing to despatch a party of your Palikars against our common enemy, Kursheed. I desire to inform you that this my fortress is impregnable, and that I can hold out against him for several years. The only service I require of your courage is, that you should reduce Arta, and take alive Ismail Pacho Bey, my former servant, the mortal enemy of my family, and the author of the evils and frightful calamities which have so long oppressed our unhappy country, which he has laid waste before our eyes. Use your best efforts to accomplish this, it will strike at the root of the evil, and my treasures shall reward your Palikars, whose courage every day gains a higher value in my eyes."

Furious at this mystification, the Suliots retired to their mountains, and Kursheed profited by the discontent Ali's conduct had caused, to win over the Toxide Skipetars, with their commanders Tahir Abbas and Hagi Bessiaris, who only made two conditions: one, that Ismail Pacho Bey, their personal enemy, should be deposed; the other, that the life of their old vizier should be respected.

The first condition was faithfully adhered to by Kursheed, actuated by private motives different from those which he gave publicly, and Ismail Pacho Bey was solemnly deposed. The tails, emblems of

his authority, were removed; he resigned the plumes of office; his soldiers forsook him, his servants followed suit. Fallen to the lowest rank, he was soon thrown into prison, where he only blamed Fate for his misfortunes. All the Skipetar Agas hastened to place themselves under Kursheeds' standard, and enormous forces now threatened Janina. All Epirus awaited the dénoûment with anxiety.

Had he been less avaricious, Ali might have enlisted all the adventurers with whom the East was swarming, and made the sultan tremble in his capital. But the aged pacha clung passionately to his treasures. He feared also, perhaps not unreasonably, that those by whose aid he might triumph would some day become his master. He long deceived himself with the idea that the English, who had sold Parga to him, would never allow a Turkish fleet to enter the Ionian Sea. Mistaken on this point, his foresight was equally at fault with regard to the cowardice of his sons. The defection of his troops was not less fatal, and he only understood the bearing of the Greek insurrection which he himself had provoked, so far as to see that in this struggle he was merely an instrument in procuring the freedom of a country which he had too cruelly oppressed to be able to hold even an inferior rank in it. His last letter to the Suliots opened the eyes of his followers, but under the influence of a sort of

polite modesty these were at least anxious to stipulate for the life of their vizier. Kursheed was obliged to produce firmans from the Porte, declaring that if Ali Tepelen submitted, the royal promise given to his sons should be kept, and that he should, with them, be transferred to Asia Minor, as also his harem, his servants, and his treasures, and allowed to finish his days in peace. Letters from 'Ali's sons were shown to the Agas, testifying to the good treatment they had experienced in their exile; and whether the latter believed all this, or whether they merely sought to satisfy their own consciences, they henceforth thought only of inducing their rebellious chief to submit. Finally, eight months' pay, given them in advance, proved decisive, and they frankly embraced the cause of the sultan.

The garrison of the castle on the lake, whom Ali seemed anxious to offend as much as possible, by refusing their pay, he thinking them so compromised that they would not venture even to accept an amnesty guaranteed by the mufti, began to desert as soon as they knew the Toxidæ had arrived at the Imperial camp. Every night these Skipetars who could cross the moat betook themselves to Kursheed's quarters. One single man yet baffled all the efforts of the besiegers. The chief engineer, Caretto, like another Archimedes, still carried terror into the midst of their camp.

Although reduced to the direst misery, Caretto could not forget that he owed his life to the master who now only repaid his services with the most sordid ingratitude. When he had first come to Epirus, Ali, recognising his ability, became anxious to retain him, but without incurring any expense. He ascertained that the Neapolitan was passionately in love with a Mohammedan girl named Nekibi, who returned his affection. Acting under Ali's orders, Tahir Abbas accused the woman before the cadi of sacrilegious intercourse with an infidel. She could only escape death by the apostasy of her lover; if he refused to deny his God, he shared her fate, and both would perish at the stake. Caretto refused to renounce his religion, but only Nekibi suffered death. Caretto was withdrawn from execution, and Ali kept him concealed in a place of safety, whence he produced him in the time of need. No one had served him with greater zeal; it is even possible that a man of this type would have died at his post, had his cup not been filled with mortification and insult.

Eluding the vigilance of Athanasius Vaya, whose charge it was to keep guard over him, Caretto let himself down by a cord fastened to the end of a cannon. He fell at the foot of the rampart, and thence dragged himself, with a broken arm, to the opposite camp. He had become nearly blind

through the explosion of a cartridge which had burnt his face. He was received as well as a Christian from whom there was now nothing to fear, could expect. He received the bread of charity, and as a refugee is only valued in proportion to the use which can be made of him, he was despised and forgotten.

The desertion of Caretto was soon followed by a defection which annihilated Ali's last hopes. The garrison which had given him so many proofs of devotion, discouraged by his avarice, suffering from a disastrous epidemic, and no longer equal to the necessary labour in defence of the place, opened all the gates simultaneously to the enemy. But the besiegers, fearing a trap, advanced very slowly; so that Ali, who had long prepared against every sort of surprise, had time to gain a place which he called his "refuge."

It was a sort of fortified enclosure, of solid masonry, bristling with cannon, which surrounded the private apartments of his seraglio, called the "Women's Tower." He had taken care to demolish everything which could be set on fire, reserving only a mosque and the tomb of his wife Emineh, whose phantom, after announcing an eternal repose, had ceased to haunt him. Beneath was an immense natural cave, in which he had stored ammunition, precious articles, provisions, and the treasures which

had not been sunk in the lake. In this cave an apartment had been made for Basilissa and his harem, also a shelter in which he retired to sleep when exhausted with fatigue. This place was his last resort, a kind of mausoleum; and he did not seem distressed at beholding the castle in the hands of his enemies. He calmly allowed them to occupy the entrance, deliver their hostages, overrun the ramparts, count the cannon which were on the platforms, crumbling from the hostile shells; but when they came within hearing, he demanded by one of his servants that Kursheed should send him an envoy of distinction; meanwhile he forbade anyone to pass beyond a certain place which he pointed out.

Kursheed, imagining that, being in the last extremity, he would capitulate, sent out Tahir Abbas and Hagi Bessiaris. Ali listened without reproaching them for their treachery, but simply observed that he wished to meet some of the chief officers.

The Seraskier then deputed his keeper of the wardrobe, accompanied by his keeper of the seals and other persons of quality. Ali received them with all ceremony, and, after the usual compliments had been exchanged, invited them to descend with him into the cavern. There he showed them more than two thousand barrels of powder carefully arranged beneath his treasures, his remaining provisions, and a number of valuable objects which adorned this

slumbering volcano. He showed them also his bedroom, a sort of cell richly furnished, and close to the powder. It could be reached only by means of three doors, the secret of which was known to no one but himself. Alongside of this was the harem, and in the neighbouring mosque was quartered his garrison, consisting of fifty men, all ready to bury themselves under the ruins of this fortification, the only spot remaining to him of all Greece, which had formerly bent beneath his authority.

After this exhibition, Ali presented one of his most devoted followers to the envoys. Selim, who watched over the fire, was a youth in appearance as gentle as his heart was intrepid, and his special duty was to be in readiness to blow up the whole place at any moment. The pacha gave him his hand to kiss, inquiring if he were ready to die, to which he only responded by pressing his master's hand fervently to his lips. He never took his eyes off Ali, and the lantern, near which a match was constantly smoking, was entrusted only to him and to Ali, who took turns with him in watching it. Ali drew a pistol from his belt, making as if to turn it towards the powder magazine, and the envoys fell at his feet, uttering involuntary cries of terror. He smiled at their fears, and assured them that, being wearied of the weight of his weapons, he had only intended to relieve himself of some of them. He then begged

them to seat themselves, and added that he should like even a more terrible funeral than that which they had just ascribed to him. "I do not wish to drag down with me," he exclaimed, "those who have come to visit me as friends; it is Kursheed, whom I have long regarded as my brother, his chiefs, those who have betrayed me, his whole army in short, whom I desire to follow me to the tomb—a sacrifice which will be worthy of my renown, and of the brilliant end to which I aspire."

The envoys gazed at him with stupefaction, which did not diminish when Ali further informed them that they were not only sitting over the arch of a casemate filled with two hundred thousand pounds of powder, but that the whole castle, which they had so rashly occupied, was undermined. "The rest you have seen," he said, "but of this you could not be aware. My riches are the sole cause of the war which has been made against me, and in one moment I can destroy them. Life is nothing to me, I might have ended it among the Greeks, but could I, a powerless old man, resolve to live on terms of equality among those whose absolute master I have been? Thus, whichever way I look, my career is ended. However, I am attached to those who still surround me, so hear my last resolve. Let a pardon, sealed by the sultan's hands, be given me, and I will submit. I will go to Constantinople, to

'Asia Minor, or wherever I am sent. The things I should see here would no longer be fitting for me to behold."

To this Kursheed's envoys made answer that without doubt these terms would be conceded. Ali then touched his breast and forehead, and, drawing forth his watch, presented it to the keeper of the wardrobe. "I mean what I say, my friend," he observed; "my word will be kept. If within an hour thy soldiers are not withdrawn from this castle which has been treacherously yielded to them, I will blow it up. Return to the Seraskier, warn him that if he allows one minute more to elapse than the time specified, his army, his garrison, I myself and my famliy, will all perish together: two hundred thousand pounds of powder can destroy all that surrounds us. Take this watch, I give it thee, and forget not that I am a man of my word." Then, dismissing the messengers, he saluted them graciously, observing that he did not expect an answer until the soldiers should have evacuated the castle.

The envoys had barely returned to the camp when Kursheed sent orders to abandon the fortress. As the reason for this step could not be concealed, everyone, exaggerating the danger, imagined deadly mines ready to be fired everywhere, and the whole army clamoured to break up the camp. Thus Ali and his fifty followers cast terror into the hearts

of nearly thirty thousand men, crowded together on the slopes of Janina. Every sound, every whiff of smoke, ascending from near the castle, became a subject of alarm for the besiegers. And as the besieged had provisions for a long time, Kursheed saw little chance of successfully ending his enterprise; when Ali's demand for pardon occurred to him. Without stating his real plans, he proposed to his Council to unite in signing a petition to the Divan for Ali's pardon.

This deed, formally executed, and bearing more than sixty signatures, was then shown to Ali, who was greatly delighted. He was described in it as Vizier, as Aulic Councillor, and also as the most distinguished veteran among His Highness the Sultan's slaves. He sent rich presents to Kursheed and the principal officers, whom he hoped to corrupt, and breathed as though the storm had passed away. The following night, however, he heard the voice of Emineh, calling him several times, and concluded that his end drew nigh.

During the two next nights he again thought he heard Emineh's voice, and sleep forsook his pillow, his countenance altered, and his endurance appeared to be giving way. Leaning on a long Malacca cane, he repaired at early dawn to Emineh's tomb, on which he offered a sacrifice of two spotted lambs, sent him by Tahir Abbas, whom in return

he consented to pardon, and the letters he received appeared to mitigate his trouble. Some days later, he saw the keeper of the wardrobe, who encouraged him, saying that before long there would be good news from Constaninople. Ali learned from him the disgrace of Pacho Bey, and of Ismail Pliaga, whom he detested equally, and this exercise of authority, which was made to appear as a beginning of satisfaction offered him, completely reassured him, and he made fresh presents to this officer, who had succeeded in inspiring him with confidence.

Whilst awaiting the arrival of the firman of pardon which Ali was reassured must arrive from Constantinople without fail, the keeper of the wardrobe advised him to seek an interview with Kursheed. It was clear that such a meeting could not take place in the undermined castle, and Ali was therefore invited to repair to the island in the lake. The magnificent pavilion, which he had constructed there in happier days, had been entirely refurnished, and it was proposed that the conference should take place in this kiosk.

Ali appeared to hesitate at this proposal, and the keeper of the wardrobe, wishing to anticipate his objections, added that the object of this arrangement was, to prove to the army, already aware of it, that there was no longer any quarrel between himself and the commander-in-chief. He added that

Kursheed would go to the conference attended only by members of his Divan, but that as it was natural an outlawed man should be on his guard, Ali might, if he liked, send to examine the place, might take with him such guards as he thought necessary, and might even arrange things on the same footing as in his citadel, even to his guardian with the lighted match, as the surest guarantee which could be given him.

The proposition was accepted, and when Ali, having crossed over with a score of soldiers, found himself more at large than he did in his casemate, he congratulated himself on having come. He had Basilissa brought over, also his diamonds, and several chests of money. Two days passed without his thinking of anything but procuring various necessaries, and he then began to inquire what caused the Seraskier to delay his visit. The latter excused himself on the plea of illness, and offered meanwhile to send anyone Ali might wish to see, to visit him. The pacha immediately mentioned several of his former followers, now employed in the Imperial army, and as no difficulty was made in allowing them to go, he profited by the permission to interview a large number of his old acquaintances, who united in reassuring him and in giving him great hopes of success.

Nevertheless, time passed on, and neither the

Seraskier nor the firman appeared. Ali, at first uneasy, ended by rarely mentioning either the one or the other, and never was deceiver more completely deceived. His security was so great that he loudly congratulated himself on having come to the island. He had begun to form a net of intrigue to cause himself to be intercepted on the road when he should be sent to Constantinople, and he did not despair of soon finding numerous partisans in the Imperial army.

CHAPTER XI

FOR a whole week all seemed going well, when, on the morning of February 5th, Kursheed sent Hassan Pacha to convey his compliments to 'Ali, and announce that the sultan's firman, so long desired, had at length arrived. Their mutual wishes had been heard, but it was desirable, for the dignity of their sovereign, that Ali, in order to show his gratitude and submission, should order Selim to extinguish the fatal match and to leave the cave, and that the rest of the garrison should first display the Imperial standard and then evacuate the enclosure. Only on this condition could Kursheed deliver into Ali's hands the sultan's decree of clemency.

Ali was alarmed, and his eyes were at length opened. He replied hesitatingly, that on leaving the citadel he had charged Selim to obey only his own verbal order, that no written command, even though signed and sealed by himself, would produce any effect, and therefore he desired to repair himself to the castle, in order to fulfil what was required.

Thereupon a long argument ensued, in which

Ali's sagacity, skill, and artifice struggled vainly against a decided line of action. New protestations were made to deceive him, oaths were even taken on the Koran that no evil designs, no mental reservations, were entertained. At length, yielding to the prayers of those who surrounded him, perhaps concluding that all his skill could no longer fight against Destiny, he finally gave way.

Drawing a secret token from his bosom, he handed it to Kursheed's envoy, saying, "Go, show this to Selim, and you will convert a dragon into a lamb." And in fact, at sight of the talisman, Selim prostrated himself, extinguished the match, —and fell, stabbed to the heart. At the same time the garrison withdrew, the Imperial standard displayed its blazonry, and the lake castle was occupied by the troops of the Seraskier, who rent the air with their acclamations.

It was then noon. Ali, in the island, had lost all illusions. His pulse beat violently, but his countenance did not betray his mental trouble. It was noticed that he appeared at intervals to be lost in profound thought, that he yawned frequently, and continually drew his fingers through his beard. He drank coffee and iced water several times, incessantly looked at his watch, and taking his field-glass, surveyed by turns the camp, the castles of Janina, the Pindus range, and the peaceful waters of the

lake. Occasionally he glanced at his weapons, and then his eyes sparkled with the fire of youth and of courage. Stationed beside him, his guards prepared their cartridges, their eyes fixed on the landing-place.

The kiosk which he occupied was connected with a wooden structure raised upon pillars, like the open-air theatres constructed for a public festival, and the women occupied the most remote apartments. Everything seemed sad and silent. The vizier, according to custom, sat facing the doorway, so as to be the first to perceive any who might wish to enter. At five o'clock boats were seen approaching the island, and soon Hassan Pacha, Omar Brionis, Kursheed's sword-bearer, Méhémet, the keeper of the wardrobe, and several officers of the army, attended by a numerous suite, drew near with gloomy countenances.

Seeing them approach, Ali sprang up impetuously, his hand upon the pistols in his belt. "Stand! . . . what is it you bring me?" he cried to Hassan in a voice of thunder. "I bring the commands of His Highness the Sultan,—knowest thou not these august characters?" And Hassan exhibited the brilliantly gilded frontispiece which decorated the firman. "I know them and revere them." "Then bow before thy destiny; make thy ablutions; address thy prayer to Allah and to His Prophet; for thy

head is demanded. . . ." Ali did not allow him to finish. "My head," he cried with fury, "will not be surrendered like the head of a slave."

These rapidly pronounced words were instantly followed by a pistol-shot which wounded Hassan in the thigh. Swift as lightning, a second killed the keeper of the wardrobe, and the guards, firing at the same time, brought down several officers. Terrified, the Osmanlis forsook the pavilion. Ali, perceiving blood flowing from a wound in his chest, roared like a bull with rage. No one dared to face his wrath, but shots were fired at the kiosk from all sides, and four of his guards fell dead beside him. He no longer knew which way to turn, hearing the noise made by the assailants under the platform, who were firing through the boards on which he stood. A ball wounded him in the side, another from below lodged in his spine; he staggered, clung to a window, then fell on the sofa. "Hasten," he cried to one of his officers, "run, my friend, and strangle my poor Basilissa; let her not fall a prey to these infamous wretches."

The door opened, all resistance ceased, the guards hastened to escape by the windows. Kursheed's sword-bearer entered, followed by the executioners. "Let the justice of Allah be accomplished!" said a cadi. At these words the executioners seized Ali, who was still alive, by the beard, and dragged him

out into the porch, where, placing his head on one of the steps, they separated it from the body with many blows of a jagged cutlass. Thus ended the career of the dreaded Ali Pacha.

His head still preserved so terrible and imposing an aspect that those present beheld it with a sort of stupor. Kursheed, to whom it was presented on a large dish of silver plate, rose to receive it, bowed three times before it, and respectfully kissed the beard, expressing aloud his wish that he himself might deserve a similar end. To such an extent did the admiration with which Ali's bravery inspired these barbarians efface the memory of his crimes. Kursheed ordered the head to be perfumed with the most costly essences, and despatched to Constantinople, and he allowed the Skipetars to render the last honours to their former master.

Never was seen greater mourning than that of the warlike Epirotes. During the whole night, the various Albanian tribes watched by turns around the corpse, improvising the most eloquent funeral songs in its honour. At daybreak, the body, washed and prepared according to the Mohammedan ritual, was deposited in a coffin draped with a splendid Indian Cashmere shawl, on which was placed a magnificent turban, adorned with the plumes Ali had worn in battle. The mane of his charger was cut off, and the animal covered with purple hous-

ings, while Ali's shield, his sword, his numerous weapons, and various insignia, were borne on the saddles of several led horses. The cortège proceeded towards the castle, accompanied by hearty imprecations uttered by the soldiers against the "Son of a Slave," the epithet bestowed on their sultan by the Turks in seasons of popular excitement.

The Selaon-Aga, an officer appointed to render the proper salutes, acted as chief mourner, surrounded by weeping mourners, who made the ruins of Janina echo with their lamentations. The guns were fired at long intervals. The portcullis was raised to admit the procession, and the whole garrison, drawn up to receive it, rendered a military salute. The body, covered with matting, was laid in a grave beside that of Amina. When the grave had been filled in, a priest approached to listen to the supposed conflict between the good and bad angels, who dispute the possession of the soul of the deceased. When he at length announced that Ali Tepelen Zadi would repose in peace amid celestial houris, the Skipetars, murmuring like the waves of the sea after a tempest, dispersed to their quarters.

Kursheed, profiting by the night spent by the Epirotes in mourning, caused Ali's head to be enclosed in a silver casket, and despatched it secretly

to Constantinople. His sword-bearer Méhémet, who, having presided at the execution, was entrusted with the further duty of presenting it to the sultan, was escorted by three hundred Turkish soldiers. He was warned to be expeditious, and before dawn was well out of reach of the Arnaouts, from whom a surprise might have been feared.

The Seraskier then ordered the unfortunate Basilissa, whose life had been spared, to be brought before him. She threw herself at his feet, imploring him to spare, not her life, but her honour; and he consoled her, and assured her of the sultan's protection. She burst into tears when she beheld Ali's secretaries, treasurers, and steward loaded with irons. Only sixty thousand purses (about twenty-five million piastres) of Ali's treasure could be found, and already his officers had been tortured, in order to compel them to disclose where the rest might be concealed. Fearing a similar fate, Basilissa fell insensible into the arms of her attendants, and she was removed to the farm of Bouila, until the Supreme Porte should decide on her fate.

The couriers sent in all directions to announce the death of Ali, having preceded the sword-bearer Méhémet's triumphal procession, the latter, on arriving at Gréveno, found the whole population of that town and the neighbouring hamlets assembled to meet him, eager to behold the head of the ter-

rible Ali Pacha. Unable to comprehend how he could possibly have succumbed, they could hardly believe their eyes when the head was withdrawn from its casket and displayed before them. It remained exposed to view in the house of the Mussulman Veli Aga whilst the escort partook of refreshment and changed horses, and as the public curiosity continued to increase throughout the journey, a fixed charge was at length made for its gratification, and the head of the renowned vizier was degraded into becoming an article of traffic exhibited at every post-house, until it arrived at Constantinople.

The sight of this dreaded relic, exposed on the 23rd of February at the gate of the seraglio, and the birth of an heir-presumptive to the sword of Othman—which news was announced simultaneously with that of the death of Ali, by the firing of the guns of the seraglio—roused the enthusiasm of the military inhabitants of Constantinople to a state of frenzy, and triumphant shouts greeted the appearance of a document affixed to the head which narrated Ali's crimes and the circumstances of his death, ending with these words: "This is the Head of the above-named Ali Pacha, a Traitor to the Faith of Islam."

Having sent magnificent presents to Kursheed, and a hyperbolical despatch to his army, Mahmoud

II turned his attention to Asia Minor, where Ali's sons would probably have been forgotten in their banishment, had it not been supposed that their riches were great. A sultan does not condescend to mince matters with his slaves, when he can despoil them with impunity; His Supreme Highness simply sent them his commands to die. Veli Pacha, a greater coward than a woman-slave born in the harem, heard his sentence kneeling. The wretch who had, in his palace at Arta, danced to the strains of a lively orchestra, while innocent victims were being tortured around him, received the due reward of his crimes. He vainly embraced the knees of his executioners, imploring at least the favour of dying in privacy; and he must have endured the full bitterness of death in seeing his sons strangled before his eyes, Méhémet the elder, remarkable for his beauty, and the gentle Selim, whose merits might have procured the pardon of his family had not Fate ordained otherwise. After next beholding the execution of his brother, Salik Pacha, Ali's best-loved son, whom a Georgian slave had borne to him in his old age, Veli, weeping, yielded his guilty head to the executioners.

His women were then seized, and the unhappy Zobeide, whose scandalous story had even reached Constantinople, sewn up in a leather sack, was flung into the Pursak—a river whose waters mingle with

those of the Sagaris. Katherin, Veli's other wife, and his daughters by various mothers, were dragged to the bazaar and sold ignominiously to Turcoman shepherds, after which the executioners at once proceeded to make an inventory of the spoils of their victims.

But the inheritance of Mouktar Pacha was not quite such an easy prey. The kapidgi-bachi who dared to present him with the bowstring was instantly laid dead at his feet by a pistol-shot. "Wretch!" cried Mouktar, roaring like a bull escaped from the butcher, "dost thou think an Arnaout dies like an eunuch? I also am a Tepelenian! To arms, comrades! they would slay us!" As he spoke, he rushed, sword in hand, upon the Turks, and driving them back, succeeded in barricading himself in his apartments.

Presently a troop of janissaries from Koutaieh, ordered to be in readiness, advanced, hauling up cannon, and a stubborn combat began. Mouktar's frail defences were soon in splinters. The venerable Metché-Bono, father of Elmas Bey, faithful to the end, was killed by a bullet; and Mouktar, having slain a host of enemies with his own hand and seen all his friends perish, himself riddled with wounds, set fire to the powder magazine, and died, leaving as inheritance for the sultan only a heap of smoking ruins. An enviable fate, if compared with that of

his father and brothers, who died by the hand of the executioner.

The heads of Ali's children, sent to Constantinople and exposed at the gate of the seraglio, astonished the gaping multitude. The sultan himself, struck with the beauty of Méhémet and Selim, whose long eyelashes and closed eyelids gave them the appearance of beautiful youths sunk in peaceful slumber, experienced a feeling of emotion. "I had imagined them," he said stupidly, "to be quite as old as their father;" and he expressed sorrow for the fate to which he had condemned them.

THE COUNTESS DE SAINT-GÉRAN

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ABOUT the end of the year 1639, a troop of horsemen arrived, towards midday, in a little village at the northern extremity of the province of Auvergne, from the direction of Paris. The country folk assembled at the noise, and found it to proceed from the provost of the mounted police and his men. The heat was excessive, the horses were bathed in sweat, the horsemen covered with dust, and the party seemed on its return from an important expedition. A man left the escort, and asked an old woman who was spinning at her door if there was not an inn in the place. The woman and her children showed him a bush hanging over a door at the end of the only street in the village, and the escort recommenced its march at a walk.

There was noticed, among the mounted men, a young man of distinguished appearance and richly dressed, who appeared to be a prisoner. This discovery redoubled the curiosity of the villagers, who followed the cavalcade as far as the door of the wine-shop. The host came out, cap in hand, and the provost enquired of him with a swaggering air

if his pothouse was large enough to accommodate his troop, men and horses. The host replied that he had the best wine in the country to give to the king's servants, and that it would be easy to collect in the neighbourhood litter and forage enough for their horses. The provost listened contemptuously to these fine promises, gave the necessary orders as to what was to be done, and slid off his horse, uttering an oath proceeding from heat and fatigue. The horsemen clustered round the young man: one held his stirrup, and the provost deferentially gave way to him to enter the inn first. No more doubt could be entertained that he was a prisoner of importance, and all kinds of conjectures were made. The men maintained that he must be charged with a great crime, otherwise a young nobleman of his rank would never have been arrested; the women argued, on the contrary, that it was impossible for such a pretty youth not to be innocent.

Inside the inn all was bustle: the serving-lads ran from cellar to garret; the host swore and despatched his servant-girls to the neighbours, and the hostess scolded her daugher, flattening her nose against the panes of a downstairs window to admire the handsome youth.

There were two tables in the principal eating-room. The provost took possession of one, leaving the other to the soldiers, who went in turn to tether

their horses under a shed in the back yard; then he pointed to a stool for the prisoner, and seated himself opposite to him, rapping the table with his thick cane.

"Ouf!" he cried, with a fresh groan of weariness, "I heartily beg your pardon, marquis, for the bad wine I am giving you!"

The young man smiled gaily.

"The wine is all very well, monsieur provost," said he, "but I cannot conceal from you that however agreeable your company is to me, this halt is very inconvenient; I am in a hurry to get through my ridiculous situation, and I should have liked to arrive in time to stop this affair at once."

The girl of the house was standing before the table with a pewter pot which she had just brought, and at these words she raised her eyes on the prisoner, with a reassured look which seemed to say, "I was sure that he was innocent."

"But," continued the marquis, carrying the glass to his lips, "this wine is not so bad as you say, monsieur provost."

Then turning to the girl, who was eyeing his gloves and his ruff—

"To your health, pretty child."

"Then," said the provost, amazed at this free and easy air, "perhaps I shall have to beg you to excuse your sleeping quarters."

"What!" exclaimed the marquis, "do we sleep here?"

"My lord," said the provost, "we have sixteen long leagues to make, our horses are done up, and so far as I am concerned I declare that I am no better than my horse."

The marquis knocked on the table, and gave every indication of being greatly annoyed. The provost meanwhile puffed and blowed, stretched out his big boots, and mopped his forehead with his handkerchief. He was a portly man, with a puffy face, whom fatigue rendered singularly uncomfortable.

"Marquis," said he, "although your company, which affords me the opportunity of showing you some attention, is very precious to me, you cannot doubt that I had much rather enjoy it on another footing. If it be within your power, as you say, to release yourself from the hands of justice, the sooner you do so the better I shall be pleased. But I beg you to consider the state we are in. For my part, I am unfit to keep the saddle another hour, and are you not yourself knocked up by this forced march in the great heat?"

"True, so I am," said the marquis, letting his arms fall by his side.

"Well, then, let us rest here, sup here, if we can, and we will start quite fit in the cool of the morning."

"Agreed," replied the marquis; "but then let us pass the time in a becoming manner. I have two pistoles left, let them be given to these good fellows to drink. It is only fair that I should treat them, seeing that I am the cause of giving them so much trouble."

He threw two pieces of money on the table of the soldiers, who cried in chorus, "Long live M. the marquis!" The provost rose, went to post sentinels, and then repaired to the kitchen, where he ordered the best supper that could be got. The men pulled out dice and began to drink and play. The marquis hummed an air in the middle of the room, twirled his moustache, turning on his heel and looking cautiously around; then he gently drew a purse from his trousers pocket, and as the daughter of the house was coming and going, he threw his arms round her neck as if to kiss her, and whispered, slipping ten louis into her hand—

"The key of the front door in my room, and a quart of liquor to the sentinels, and you save my life."

The girl went backwards nearly to the door, and returning with an expressive look, made an affirmative sign with her hand. The provost returned, and two hours later supper was served. He ate and drank like a man more at home at table than in the saddle. The marquis plied him with bumpers,

and sleepiness, added to the fumes of a very heady wine, caused him to repeat over and over again—

"Confound it all, marquis, I can't believe you are such a blackguard as they say you are; you seem to me a jolly good sort."

The marquis thought he was ready to fall under the table, and was beginning to open negotiations with the daughter of the house, when, to his great disappointment, bedtime having come, the provoking provost called his sergeant, gave him instructions in an undertone, and announced that he should have the honour of conducting M. the marquis to bed, and that he should not go to bed himself before performing this duty. In fact, he posted three of his men, with torches, escorted the prisoner to his room, and left him with many profound bows.

The marquis threw himself on his bed without pulling off his boots, listening to a clock which struck nine. He heard the men come and go in the stables and in the yard.

An hour later, everybody being tired, all was perfectly still. The prisoner then rose softly, and felt about on tiptoe on the chimneypiece, on the furniture, and even in his clothes, for the key which he hoped to find. He could not find it. He could not be mistaken, nevertheless, in the tender interest of the young girl, and he could not believe

that she was deceiving him. The marquis's room had a window which opened upon the street, and a door which gave access to a shabby gallery which did duty for a balcony, whence a staircase ascended to the principal rooms of the house. This gallery hung over the courtyard, being as high above it as the window was from the street. The marquis had only to jump over one side or the other: he hesitated for some time, and just as he was deciding to leap into the street, at the risk of breaking his neck, two taps were struck on the door. He jumped for joy, saying to himself as he opened, "I am saved!" A kind of shadow glided into the room; the young girl trembled from head to foot, and could not say a word. The marquis reassured her with all sorts of caresses.

"Ah, sir," said she, "I am dead if we are surprised."

"Yes," said the marquis, "but your fortune is made if you get me out of here."

"God is my witness that I would with all my soul, but I have such a bad piece of news——"

She stopped, suffocated with varying emotions. The poor girl had come barefooted, for fear of making a noise, and appeared to be shivering.

"What is the matter?" impatiently asked the marquis.

"Before going to bed," she continued, "M. the

provost has required from my father all the keys of the house, and has made him take a great oath that there are no more. My father has given him all: besides, there is a sentinel at every door; but they are very tired; I have heard them muttering and grumbling, and I have given them more wine than you told me."

"They will sleep," said the marquis, nowise discouraged, "and they have already shown great respect to my rank in not nailing me up in this room."

"There is a small kitchen garden," continued the girl, "on the side of the fields, fenced in only by a loose hurdle, but——"

"Where is my horse?"

"No doubt in the shed with the rest."

"I will jump into the yard."

"You will be killed."

"So much the better!"

"Ah! monsieur marquis, what have you done?" said the young girl with grief.

"Some foolish things! nothing worth mentioning; but my head and my honour are at stake. Let us lose no time; I have made up my mind."

"Stay," replied the girl, grasping his arm; "at the left-hand corner of the yard there is a large heap of straw, the gallery hangs just over it——"

"Bravo! I shall make less noise, and do myself

less mischief." He made a step towards the door; the girl, hardly knowing what she was doing, tried to detain him; but he got loose from her and opened it. The moon was shining brightly into the yard; he heard no sound. He proceeded to the end of the wooden rail, and perceived the dungheap, which rose to a good height: the girl made the sign of the cross. The marquis listened once again, heard nothing, and mounted the rail. He was about to jump down, when by wonderful luck he heard murmurings from a deep voice. This proceeded from one of two horsemen, who were recommencing their conversation and passing between them a pint of wine. The marquis crept back to his door, holding his breath: the girl was awaiting him on the threshold.

"I told you it was not yet time," said she.

"Have you never a knife," said the marquis, "to cut those rascals' throats with?"

"Wait, I entreat you, one hour, one hour only," murmured the young girl; "in an hour they will all be asleep."

The girl's voice was so sweet, the arms which she stretched towards him were full of such gentle entreaty, that the marquis waited, and at the end of an hour it was the young girl's turn to tell him to start.

The marquis for the last time pressed with his

mouth those lips but lately so innocent, then he half opened the door, and heard nothing this time but dogs barking far away in an otherwise silent country. He leaned over the balustrade, and saw very plainly a soldier lying prone on the straw.

"If they were to awake?" murmured the young girl in accents of anguish.

"They will not take me alive, be assured," said the marquis.

"Adieu, then," replied she, sobbing; "may Heaven preserve you!"

He bestrode the balustrade, spread himself out upon it, and fell heavily on the dungheap. The young girl saw him run to the shed, hastily detach a horse, pass behind the stable wall, spur his horse in both flanks, tear across the kitchen garden, drive his horse against the hurdle, knock it down, clear it, and reach the highroad across the fields.

The poor girl remained at the end of the gallery, fixing her eyes on the sleeping sentry, and ready to disappear at the slightest movement. The noise made by spurs on the pavement and by the horse at the end of the courtyard had half awakened him. He rose, and suspecting some surprise, ran to the shed. His horse was no longer there; the marquis, in his haste to escape, had taken the first which came to hand, and this was the soldier's. Then the soldier gave the alarm; his comrades woke up. They ran

to the prisoner's room, and found it empty. The provost came from his bed in a dazed condition. The prisoner had escaped.

Then the young girl, pretending to have been roused by the noise, hindered the preparations by mislaying the saddlery, impeding the horsemen instead of helping them; nevertheless, after a quarter of an hour, all the party were galloping along the road. The provost swore like a pagan. The best horses led the way, and the sentinel, who rode the marquis's, and who had a greater interest in catching the prisoner, far outstripped his companions; he was followed by the sergeant, equally well mounted, and as the broken fence showed the line he had taken, after some minutes they were in view of him, but at a great distance. However, the marquis was losing ground; the horse he had taken was the worst in the troop, and he had pressed it as hard as it could go. Turning in the saddle, he saw the soldiers half a musket-shot off; he urged his horse more and more, tearing his sides with his spurs; but shortly the beast, completely winded, foundered; the marquis rolled with it in the dust, but when rolling over he caught hold of the holsters, which he found to contain pistols; he lay flat by the side of the horse, as if he had fainted, with a pistol at full cock in his hand. The sentinel, mounted on a valuable horse, and more than two hundred yards

ahead of his serafile, came up to him. In a moment the marquis, jumping up before he had time to resist him, shot him through the head; the horseman fell, the marquis jumped up in his place without even setting foot in the stirrup, started off at a gallop, and went away like the wind, leaving fifty yards behind him the non-commissioned officer, dumbfounded with what had just passed before his eyes.

The main body of the escort galloped up, thinking that he was taken; and the provost shouted till he was hoarse, "Do not kill him!" But they found only the sergeant, trying to restore life to his man, whose skull was shattered, and who lay dead on the spot.

As for the marquis, he was out of sight; for, fearing a fresh pursuit, he had plunged into the cross roads, along which he rode a good hour longer at full gallop. When he felt pretty sure of having shaken the police off his track, and that their bad horses could not overtake him, he determined to slacken to recruit his horse; he was walking him along a hollow lane, when he saw a peasant approaching; he asked him the road to the Bourbonnais, and flung him a crown. The man took the crown and pointed out the road, but he seemed hardly to know what he was saying, and stared at the marquis in a strange manner. The marquis

shouted to him to get out of the way; but the peasant remained planted on the roadside without stirring an inch. The marquis advanced with threatening looks, and asked how he dared to stare at him like that.

"The reason is," said the peasant, "that you have——" and he pointed to his shoulder and his ruff.

The marquis glanced at his dress, and saw that his coat was dabbled in blood, which, added to the disorder of his clothes and the dust with which he was covered, gave him a most suspicious aspect.

"I know," said he. "I and my servant have been separated in a scuffle with some drunken Germans; it's only a tipsy spree, and whether I have got scratched, or whether in collaring one of these fellows I have drawn some of his blood, it all arises from the row. I don't think I am hurt a bit." So saying, he pretended to feel all over his body.

"All the same," he continued, "I should not be sorry to have a wash; besides, I am dying with thirst and heat, and my horse is in no better case. Do you know where I can rest and refresh myself?"

The peasant offered to guide him to his own house, only a few yards off. His wife and children, who were working, respectfully stood aside, and went to collect what was wanted—wine, water,

fruit, and a large piece of black bread. The marquis sponged his coat, drank a glass of wine, and called the people of the house, whom he questioned in an indifferent manner. He once more informed himself of the different roads leading into the Bourbonnais province, where he was going to visit a relative; of the villages, cross roads, distances; and finally he spoke of the country, the harvest, and asked what news there was.

The peasant replied, with regard to this, that it was surprising to hear of disturbances on the highway at this moment, when it was patrolled by detachments of mounted police, who had just made an important capture.

"Who is that?" asked the marquis.

"Oh," said the peasant, "a nobleman who has done a lot of mischief in the country."

"What! a nobleman in the hands of justice?"

"Just so; and he stands a good chance of losing his head."

"Do they say what he has done?"

"Shocking things; horrid things; everything he shouldn't do. All the province is exasperated with him."

"Do you know him?"

"No, but we all have his description."

As this news was not encouraging, the marquis, after a few more questions, saw to his horse, patted

him, threw some more money to the peasant, and disappeared in the direction pointed out.

The provost proceeded half a league farther along the road; but coming to the conclusion that pursuit was useless, he sent one of his men to headquarters, to warn all the points of exit from the province, and himself returned with his troop to the place whence he had started in the morning. The marquis had relatives in the neighbourhood, and it was quite possible that he might seek shelter with some of them. All the village ran to meet the horsemen, who were obliged to confess that they had been duped by the handsome prisoner. Different views were expressed on the event, which gave rise to much talking. The provost entered the inn, banging his fist on the furniture, and blaming everybody for the misfortune which had happened to him. The daughter of the house, at first a prey to the most grievous anxiety, had great difficulty in concealing her joy.

The provost spread his papers over the table, as if to nurse his ill-temper.

"The biggest rascal in the world!" he cried; "I ought to have suspected him."

"What a handsome man he was!" said the hostess.

"A consummate rascal! Do you know who he is? He is the Marquis de Saint-Maixent!"

"The Marquis de Saint-Maixent!" all cried with horror.

"Yes, the very man," replied the provost; "the Marquis de Saint-Maixent, accused, and indeed convicted, of coining and magic."

"Ah!"

"Convicted of incest."

"O my God!"

"Convicted of having strangled his wife to marry another, whose husband he had first stabbed."

"Heaven help us!" All crossed themselves.

"Yes, good people," continued the furious provost, "this is the nice boy who has just escaped the king's justice!"

The host's daughter left the room, for she felt she was going to faint.

"But," said the host, "is there no hope of catching him again?"

"Not the slightest, if he has taken the road to the Bourbonnais; for I believe there are in that province noblemen belonging to his family who will not allow him to be rearrested."

The fugitive was, indeed, no other than the Marquis de Saint-Maixent, accused of all the enormous crimes detailed by the provost, who by his audacious flight opened for himself an active part in the strange story which it remains to relate.

It came to pass, a fortnight after these events,

that a mounted gentleman rang at the wicket gate of the chateau de Saint-Géran, at the gates of Moulins. It was late, and the servants were in no hurry to open. The stranger again pulled the bell in a masterful manner, and at length perceived a man running from the bottom of the avenue. The servant peered through the wicket, and making out in the twilight a very ill-appointed traveller, with a crushed hat, dusty clothes, and no sword, asked him what he wanted, receiving a blunt reply that the stranger wished to see the Count de Saint-Géran without any further loss of time. The servant replied that this was impossible; the other got into a passion.

"Who are you?" asked the man in livery.

"You are a very ceremonious fellow!" cried the horseman. "Go and tell M. de Saint-Géran that his relative, the Marquis de Saint-Maixent, wishes to see him at once."

The servant made humble apologies, and opened the wicket gate. He then walked before the marquis, called other servants, who came to help him to dismount, and ran to give his name in the count's apartments. The latter was about to sit down to supper when his relative was announced; he immediately went to receive the marquis, embraced him again and again, and gave him the most friendly and gracious reception possible. He wished then to

take him into the dining-room to present him to all the family; but the marquis called his attention to the disorder of his dress, and begged for a few minutes' conversation. The count took him into his dressing-room, and had him dressed from head to foot in his own clothes, whilst they talked. The marquis then narrated a made-up story to M. de Saint-Géran relative to the accusation brought against him. This greatly impressed his relative, and gave him a secure footing in the chateau. When he had finished dressing, he followed the count, who presented him to the countess and the rest of the family.

It will now be in place to state who the inmates of the chateau were, and to relate some previous occurrences to explain subsequent ones.

The Marshal de Saint-Géran, of the illustrious house of Guiche, and governor of the Bourbonnais, had married, for his first wife, Anne de Tournon, by whom he had one son, Claude de la Guiche, and one daughter, who married the Marquis de Bouillé. His wife dying, he married again with Suzanne des Epaules, who had also been previously married, being the widow of the Count de Longaunay, by whom she had Suzanne de Longaunay.

The marshal and his wife, Suzanne des Epaules, for the mutual benefit of their children by first nuptials, determined to marry them, thus sealing

their own union with a double tie. Claude de Guiche, the marshal's son, married Suzanne de Longaunay.

This alliance was much to the distaste of the Marchioness de Bouillé, the marshal's daughter, who found herself separated from her stepmother, and married to a man who, it was said, gave her great cause for complaint, the greatest being his threescore years and ten.

The contract of marriage between Claude de la Guiche and Suzanne de Longaunay was executed at Rouen on the 17th of February 1619; but the tender age of the bridegroom, who was then but eighteen, was the cause of his taking a tour in Italy, whence he returned after two years. The marriage was a very happy one but for one circumstance—it produced no issue. The countess could not endure a barrenness which threatened the end of a great name, the extinction of a noble race. She made vows, pilgrimages; she consulted doctors and quacks; but to no purpose.

The Marshal de Saint-Géran died on the 10th of December 1632, having the mortification of having seen no descending issue from the marriage of his son. The latter, now Count de Saint-Géran, succeeded his father in the government of the Bourbonnais, and was named Chevalier of the King's Orders.

Meanwhile the Marchioness de Bouillé quarrelled with her old husband the marquis, separated from him after a scandalous divorce, and came to live at the chateau of Saint-Géran, quite at ease as to her brother's marriage, seeing that in default of heirs all his property would revert to her.

Such was the state of affairs when the Marquis de Saint-Maixent arrived at the chateau. He was young, handsome, very cunning, and very successful with women; he even made a conquest of the dowager Countess de Saint-Géran, who lived there with her children. He soon plainly saw that he might easily enter into the most intimate relations with the Marchioness de Bouillé.

The Marquis de Saint-Maixent's own fortune was much impaired by his extravagance and by the exactions of the law, or rather, in plain words, he had lost it all. The marchioness was heiress presumptive to the count: he calculated that she would soon lose her own husband; in any case, the life of a septuagenarian did not much trouble a man like the marquis; he could then prevail upon the marchioness to marry him, thus giving him the command of the finest fortune in the province.

He set to work to pay his court to her, especially avoiding anything that could excite the slightest suspicion. It was, however, difficult to get on good terms with the marchioness without showing out-

siders what was going on. But the marchioness, already prepossessed by the agreeable exterior of M. de Saint-Maixent, soon fell into his toils, and the unhappiness of her marriage, with the annoyances incidental to a scandalous case in the courts, left her powerless to resist his schemes. Nevertheless, they had but few opportunities of seeing one another alone: the countess innocently took a part in all their conversations; the count often came to take the marquis out hunting; the days passed in family pursuits. M. de Saint-Maixent had not so far had an opportunity of saying what a discreet woman ought to pretend not to hear; this intrigue, notwithstanding the marquis's impatience, dragged terribly.

The countess, as has been stated, had for twenty years never ceased to hope that her prayers would procure for her the grace of bearing a son to her husband. Out of sheer weariness she had given herself up to all kinds of charlatans, who at that period were well received by people of rank. On one occasion she brought from Italy a sort of astrologer, who as nearly as possible poisoned her with a horrible nostrum, and was sent back to his own country in a hurry, thanking his stars for having escaped so cheaply. This procured Madame de Saint-Géran a severe reprimand from her confessor; and, as time went on, she gradually accus-

tomed herself to the painful conclusion that she would die childless, and cast herself into the arms of religion. The count, whose tenderness for her never failed, yet clung to the hope of an heir, and made his Will with this in view. The marchioness's hopes had become certainties, and M. de Saint-Maixent, perfectly tranquil on this head, thought only of forwarding his suit with Madame de Bouillé, when, at the end of the month of November 1640, the Count de Saint-Géran was obliged to repair to Paris in great haste on pressing duty.

The countess, who could not bear to be separated from her husband, took the family advice as to accompanying him. The marquis, delighted at an opportunity which left him almost alone in the chateau with Madame de Bouillé, painted the journey to Paris in the most attractive colours, and said all he could to decide her to go. The marchioness, for her part, worked very quietly to the same end; it was more than was needed. It was settled that the countess should go with M. de Saint-Géran. She soon made her preparations, and a few days later they set off on the journey together.

The marquis had no fears about declaring his passion; the conquest of Madame de Bouillé gave him no trouble; he affected the most violent love, and she responded in the same terms. All their time was spent in excursions and walks from which

the servants were excluded; the lovers, always together, passed whole days in some retired part of the park, or shut up in their apartments. It was impossible for these circumstances not to cause gossip among an army of servants, against whom they had to keep incessantly on their guard; and this naturally happened.

The marchioness soon found herself obliged to make confidantes of the sisters Quinet, her maids; she had no difficulty in gaining their support, for the girls were greatly attached to her. This was the first step of shame for Madame de Bouillé, and the first step of corruption for herself and her paramour, who soon found themselves entangled in the blackest of plots. Moreover, there was at the chateau de Saint-Géran a tall, spare, yellow, stupid man, just intelligent enough to perform, if not to conceive, a bad action, who was placed in authority over the domestics; he was a common peasant whom the old marshal had deigned to notice, and whom the count had by degrees promoted to the service of major-domo on account of his long service in the house, and because he had seen him there since he himself was a child; he would not take him away as body servant, fearing that his notions of service would not do for Paris, and left him to the superintendence of the household. The marquis had a quiet talk with this man, took his measure, warped

his mind as he wished, gave him some money, and acquired him body and soul. These different agents undertook to stop the chatter of the servants' hall, and thenceforward the lovers could enjoy free intercourse.

One evening, as the Marquis de Saint-Maixent was at supper in company with the marchioness, a loud knocking was heard at the gate of the chateau, to which they paid no great attention. This was followed by the appearance of a courier who had come post haste from Paris; he entered the court-yard with a letter from the Count de Saint-Géran for M. the marquis; he was announced and introduced, followed by nearly all the household. The marquis asked the meaning of all this, and dismissed all the following with a wave of the hand; but the courier explained that M. the count desired that the letter in his hands should be read before everyone. The marquis opened it without replying, glanced over it, and read it out loud without the slightest alteration: the count announced to his good relations and to all his household that the countess had indicated positive symptoms of pregnancy; that hardly had she arrived in Paris when she suffered from fainting fits, nausea, retching, that she bore with joy these premonitory indications, which were no longer a matter of doubt to the physicians, nor to anyone; that for his part he was overwhelmed

with joy at this event, which was the crowning stroke to all his wishes; that he desired the chateau to share his satisfaction by indulging in all kinds of gaieties; and that so far as other matters were concerned they could remain as they were till the return of himself and the countess, which the letter would precede only a few days, as he was going to transport her in a litter for greater safety. Then followed the specification of certain sums of money to be distributed among the servants.

The servants uttered cries of joy; the marquis and marchioness exchanged a look, but a very troublous one; they, however, restrained themselves so far as to simulate a great satisfaction, and the marquis brought himself to congratulate the servants on their attachment to their master and mistress. After this they were left alone, looking very serious, while crackers exploded and violins resounded under the windows. For some time they preserved silence, the first thought which occurred to both being that the count and countess had allowed themselves to be deceived by trifling symptoms, that people had wished to flatter their hopes, that it was impossible for a constitution to change so suddenly after twenty years, and that it was a case of simulative pregnancy. This opinion gaining strength in their minds made them somewhat calmer.

The next day they took a walk side by side in a

solitary path in the park and discussed the chances of their situation. M. de Saint-Maixent brought before the marchioness the enormous injury which this event would bring them. He then said that even supposing the news to be true, there were many rocks ahead to be weathered before the succession could be pronounced secure.

"The child may die," he said at last.

And he uttered some sinister expressions on the slight damage caused by the loss of a puny creature without mind, interest, or consequence; nothing, he said, but a bit of ill-organised matter, which only came into the world to ruin so considerable a person as the marchioness.

"But what is the use of tormenting ourselves?" he went on impatiently; "the countess is not pregnant, nor can she be."

A gardener working near them overheard this part of the conversation, but as they walked away from him he could not hear any more.

A few days later, some outriders, sent before him by the count, entered the chateau, saying that their master and mistress were close at hand. In fact, they were promptly followed by brakes and travelling-carriages, and at length the countess's litter was descried, which M. de Saint-Géran, on horseback, had never lost sight of during the journey. It was a triumphal reception: all the peasants had

left their work, and filled the air with shouts of welcome; the servants ran to meet their mistress; the ancient retainers wept for joy at seeing the count so happy and in the hope that his noble qualities might be perpetuated in his heir. The marquis and Madame de Bouillé did their best to tune up to the pitch of this hilarity.

The dowager countess, who had arrived at the château the same day, unable to convince herself as to this news, had the pleasure of satisfying herself respecting it. The count and countess were much beloved in the Bourbonnais province; this event caused therein a general satisfaction, particularly in the numerous houses attached to them by consanguinity. Within a few days of their return, more than twenty ladies of quality flocked to visit them in great haste, to show the great interest they took in this pregnancy. All these ladies, on one occasion or another, convinced themselves as to its genuineness, and many of them, carrying the subject still further, in a joking manner which pleased the countess, dubbed themselves prophetesses, and predicted the birth of a boy. The usual symptoms incidental to the situation left no room for doubt: the country physicians were all agreed. The count kept one of these physicians in the château for two months, and spoke to the Marquis of Saint-Maixent of his intention of procuring a good mid-

wife, on the same terms. Finally, the dowager countess, who was to be sponsor, ordered at a great expense a magnificent store of baby linen, which she desired to present at the birth.

The marchioness devoured her rage, and among the persons who went beside themselves with joy not one remarked the disappointment which overspread her soul. Every day she saw the marquis, who did all he could to increase her regret, and incessantly stirred up her ill-humour by repeating that the count and countess were triumphing over her misfortune, and insinuating that they were importing a supposititious child to disinherit her. As usual both in private and political affairs, he began by corrupting the marchioness's religious views, to pervert her into crime. The marquis was one of those libertines so rare at that time, a period less unhappy than is generally believed, who made science dependent upon atheism. It is remarkable that great criminals of this epoch, Sainte-Croix for instance, and Exili, the gloomy poisoner, were the first unbelievers, and that they preceded the learned of the following age both in philosophy and in the exclusive study of physical science, in which they included that of poisons. Passion, interest, hatred fought the marquis's battles in the heart of Madame de Bouillé; she readily lent herself to everything that M. de Saint-Maixent wished

The Marquis de Saint-Maixent had a confidential servant, cunning, insolent, resourceful, whom he had brought from his estates, a servant well suited to such a master, whom he sent on errands frequently into the neighbourhood of Saint-Géran.

One evening, as the marquis was about to go to bed, this man, returning from one of his expeditions, entered his room, where he remained for a long time, telling him that he had at length found what he wanted, and giving him a small piece of paper which contained several names of places and persons.

Next morning, at daybreak, the marquis caused two of his horses to be saddled, pretended that he was summoned home on pressing business, foresaw that he should be absent for three or four days, made his excuses to the count, and set off at full gallop, followed by his servant.

They slept that night at an inn on the road to Auvergne, to put off the scent any persons who might recognise them; then, following cross-country roads, they arrived after two days at a large hamlet, which they had seemed to have passed far to their left.

In this hamlet was a woman who practised the avocation of midwife, and was known as such in the neighbourhood, but who had, it was said, mysterious and infamous secrets for those who paid

her well. Further, she drew a good income from the influence which her art gave her over credulous people. It was all in her line to cure the king's evil, compound philtres and love potions; she was useful in a variety of ways to girls who could afford to pay her; she was a lovers' go-between, and even practised sorcery for country folk. She played her cards so well, that the only persons privy to her misdeeds were unfortunate creatures who had as strong an interest as herself in keeping them profoundly secret; and as her terms were very high, she lived comfortably enough in a house her own property, and entirely alone, for greater security. In a general way, she was considered skilful in her ostensible profession, and was held in estimation by many persons of rank. This woman's name was Louise Goillard.

Alone one evening after curfew, she heard a loud knocking at the door of her house. Accustomed to receive visits at all hours, she took her lamp without hesitation, and opened the door. An armed man, apparently much agitated, entered the room. Louise Goillard, in a great fright, fell into a chair; this man was the Marquis de Saint-Maixent.

"Calm yourself, good woman," said the stranger, panting and stammering; "be calm, I beg; for it is I, not you, who have any cause for emotion. I am not a brigand, and far from your having anything

to fear, it is I, on the contrary, who am come to beg for your assistance."

He threw his cloak into a corner, unbuckled his waistbelt, and laid aside his sword. Then falling into a chair, he said—

"First of all, let me rest a little."

The marquis wore a travelling-dress; but although he had not stated his name, Louise Goillard saw at a glance that he was a very different person from what she had thought, and that, on the contrary, he was some fine gentleman who had come on his love affairs.

"I beg you to excuse," said she, "a fear which is insulting to you. You came in so hurriedly that I had not time to see whom I was talking to. My house is rather lonely; I am alone; ill-disposed people might easily take advantage of these circumstances to plunder a poor woman who has little enough to lose. The times are so bad! You seem tired. Will you inhale some essence?"

"Give me only a glass of water."

Louise Goillard went into the adjoining room, and returned with an ewer. The marquis affected to rinse his lips, and said—

"I come from a great distance on a most important matter. Be assured that I shall be properly grateful for your services."

He felt in his pocket, and pulled out a purse, which he rolled between his fingers.

"In the first place, you must swear to the greatest secrecy."

"There is no need of that with us," said Louise Goillard; "that is the first condition of our craft."

"I must have more express guarantees, and your oath that you will reveal to no one in the world what I am going to confide to you."

"I give you my word, then, since you demand it; but I repeat that this is superfluous; you do not know me."

"Consider that this is a most serious matter, that I am as it were placing my head in your hands, and that I would lose my life a thousand times rather than see this mystery unravelled."

"Consider also," bluntly replied the midwife, "that we ourselves are primarily interested in all the secrets entrusted to us; that an indiscretion would destroy all confidence in us, and that there are even cases—— You may speak."

When the marquis had reassured her as to himself by this preface, he continued: "I know that you are a very able woman."

"I could indeed wish to be one, to serve you."

"That you have pushed the study of your art to its utmost limits."

"I fear they have been flattering your humble servant."

"And that your studies have enabled you to predict the future."

"That is all nonsense."

"It is true; I have been told so."

"You have been imposed upon."

"What is the use of denying it and refusing to do me a service?"

Louise Goillard defended herself long: she could not understand a man of this quality believing in fortune-telling, which she practised only with low-class people and rich farmers; but the marquis appeared so earnest that she knew not what to think.

"Listen," said he, "it is no use dissembling with me, I know all. Be easy; we are playing a game in which you are laying one against a thousand; moreover, here is something on account to compensate you for the trouble I am giving."

He laid a pile of gold on the table. The matron weakly owned that she had sometimes attempted astrological combinations which were not always fortunate, and that she had been only induced to do so by the fascination of the phenomena of science. The secret of her guilty practices was drawn from her at the very outset of her defence.

"That being so," replied the marquis, "you must be already aware of the situation in which I find

myself; you must know that, hurried away by a blind and ardent passion, I have betrayed the confidence of an old lady and violated the laws of hospitality by seducing her daughter in her own house; that matters have come to a crisis, and that this noble damsel, whom I love to distraction, being pregnant, is on the point of losing her life and honour by the discovery of her fault, which is mine."

The matron replied that nothing could be ascertained about a person except from private questions; and to further impose upon the marquis, she fetched a kind of box marked with figures and strange emblems. Opening this, and putting together certain figures which it contained, she declared that what the marquis had told her was true, and that his situation was a most melancholy one. She added, in order to frighten him, that he was threatened by still more serious misfortunes than those which had already overtaken him, but that it was easy to anticipate and obviate these mischances by new consultations.

"Madame," replied the marquis, "I fear only one thing in the world, the dishonour of the woman I love. Is there no method of remedying the usual embarrassment of a birth?"

"I know of none," said the matron.

"The young lady has succeeded in concealing

her condition; it would be easy for her confinement to take place privately."

"She has already risked her life, and I cannot consent to be mixed up in this affair, for fear of the consequences."

"Could not, for instance," said the marquis, "a confinement be effected without pain?"

"I don't know about that, but this I do know, that I shall take very good care not to practise any method contrary to the laws of nature."

"You are deceiving me: you are acquainted with this method, you have already practised it upon a certain person whom I could name to you."

"Who has dared to calumniate me thus? I operate only after the decision of the Faculty. God forbid that I should be stoned by all the physicians, and perhaps expelled from France!"

"Will you then let me die of despair? If I were capable of making a bad use of your secrets, I could have done so long ago, for I know them. In Heaven's name, do not dissimulate any longer, and tell me how it is possible to stifle the pangs of labour. Do you want more gold? Here it is." And he threw more louis on the table.

"Stay," said the matron: "there is perhaps a method which I think I have discovered, and which I have never employed, but I believe it efficacious."

"But if you have never employed it, it may be

dangerous, and risk the life of the lady whom I love."

"When I say never, I mean that I have tried it once, and most successfully. Be at your ease."

"Ah!" cried the marquis, "you have earned my everlasting gratitude! But," continued he, "if we could anticipate the confinement itself, and remove from henceforth the symptoms of pregnancy?"

"Oh, sir, that is a great crime you speak of!"

"Alas!" continued the marquis, as if speaking to himself in a fit of intense grief, "I had rather lose a dear child, the pledge of our love, than bring into the world an unhappy creature which might possibly cause its mother's death."

"I pray you, sir, let no more be said on the subject; it is a horrible crime even to think of such a thing."

"But what is to be done? Is it better to destroy two persons and perhaps kill a whole family with despair? Oh, madame, I entreat you, extricate us from this extremity!"

The marquis buried his face in his hands, and sobbed as though he were weeping copiously.

"Your despair grievously affects me," said the matron; "but consider that for a woman of my calling it is a capital offence."

"What are you talking about? Do not our mystery, our safety, and our credit come in first?

They can never get at you till after the death and dishonour of all that is dear to me in the world."

"I might then, perhaps—— But in this case you must insure me against legal complications, fines, and procure me a safe exit from the kingdom."

"Ah! that is my affair. Take my whole fortune! Take my life!"

And he threw the whole purse on the table.

"In this case, and solely to extricate you from the extreme danger in which I see you placed, I consent to give you a decoction, and certain instructions, which will instantly relieve the lady from her burden. She must use the greatest precaution, and study to carry out exactly what I am about to tell you. My God! only such desperate occasions as this one could induce me to—— Here——"

She took a flask from the bottom of a cupboard, and continued—

"Here is a liquor which never fails."

"Oh, madame, you save my honour, which is dearer to me than life! But this is not enough: tell me what use I am to make of this liquor, and in what doses I am to administer it."

"The patient," replied the midwife, "must take one spoonful the first day; the second day two; the third——"

"I shall never remember all that; write it out for me, I pray you, in my pocket-book."

The midwife hesitated for a moment; but the pocket-book when opened let fall a draft to bearer for five hundred francs; the marquis took this draft and presented it to her. "Here," said he, "since it has fallen out, it is not worth while replacing it."

This last present was so handsome as to allay all suspicions in the mind of the midwife, so she wrote the full instructions in the marquis's pocket-book.

The marquis put the bottle in his pocket; took the pocket-book, making sure that the instructions were fully given; then, turning to the midwife with a diabolical smile—

"And now, my darling," cried he, "you are completely in my power."

"What do you mean, sir?" demanded the astonished midwife.

"I mean," continued the marquis, "that you are an infamous sorceress and a miserable poisoner. I mean that I have proof of your crimes, and that now you shall do what I want or die at the stake."

"Mercy! mercy!" cried the matron, throwing herself at the feet of the marquis.

"Your fate is in my hands," coolly replied the marquis.

"Well, what must I do?" asked the midwife. "I am ready to do anything."

"Then it is my turn to tell you my secrets; only I shall not write them down."

"Name them, my lord, and you shall be satisfied with my devotion."

"Sit down, then, and listen to me."

The midwife rose and sank back into a chair.

"Now, then," said the marquis, "I see that you grasp the alternative: on one hand, prison, torture, the stake; on the other, three times as much gold as you have there; in short, ease and comfort for the rest of your life."

The midwife's eyes sparkled, and she thanked the marquis by a nod of the head, as if to show him that she was his, body and soul.

"There is," continued the marquis, fixing a piercing look in the eyes of the poor woman,— "there is in a chateau thirty leagues away a lady of high rank who is some months advanced in pregnancy. The birth of this child is hateful to me. You will be entrusted with the delivery. I will tell you what to do, and you will do all that I tell you. Now we must set out to-night. You will accompany me. I have horses not far from here, and will take you to a place where you will await my orders. You will be warned when the time comes. You will want for nothing, and all the money you require shall be forthcoming."

"I am ready," said the midwife curtly.

"You will obey me to the minutest particular?"

"I swear it."

"Let us start, then."

She asked but for time to pack a little linen, put things in order, then fastened her doors, and left the house with the marquis. A quarter of an hour later they were galloping through the night, without her knowing where the marquis was taking her.

The marquis reappeared three days later at the chateau, finding the count's family as he had left them—that is to say, intoxicated with hope, and counting the weeks, days, and hours before the accouchement of the countess. He excused his hurried departure on the ground of the importance of the business which had summoned him away; and speaking of his journey at table, he related a story current in the country whence he came, of a surprising event which he had all but witnessed. It was the case of a lady of quality who suddenly found herself in the most dangerous pangs of labour. All the skill of the physicians who had been summoned proved futile; the lady was at the point of death; at last, in sheer despair, they summoned a midwife of great repute among the peasantry, but whose practice did not include the gentry. From the first treatment of this woman, who appeared modest and diffident to a degree, the pains

ceased as if by enchantment; the patient fell into an indefinable calm languor, and after some hours was delivered of a beautiful infant; but after this was attacked by a violent fever which brought her to death's door. They then again had recourse to the doctors, notwithstanding the opposition of the master of the house, who had confidence in the matron. The doctors' treatment only made matters worse. In this extremity they again called in the midwife, and at the end of three weeks the lady was miraculously restored to life, thus, added the marquis, establishing the reputation of the matron, who had sprung into such vogue in the town where she lived and the neighbouring country that nothing else was talked about.

This story made a great impression on the company, on account of the condition of the countess; the dowager added that it was very wrong to ridicule these humble country experts, who often through observation and experience discovered secrets which proud doctors were unable to unravel with all their studies. Hereupon the count cried out that this midwife must be sent for, as she was just the kind of woman they wanted. After this other matters were talked about, the marquis changing the conversation; he had gained his point in quietly introducing the thin end of the wedge of his design.

After dinner, the company walked on the terrace. The countess dowager not being able to walk much on account of her advanced age, the countess and Madame de Bouillé took chairs beside her. The count walked up and down with M. de Saint-Maixent. The marquis naturally asked how things had been going on during his absence, and if Madame de Saint-Géran had suffered any inconvenience, for her pregnancy had become the most important affair in the household, and hardly anything else was talked about.

"By the way," said the count, "you were speaking just now of a very skilful midwife; would it not be a good step to summon her?"

"I think," replied the marquis, "that it would be an excellent selection, for I do not suppose there is one in this neighbourhood to compare to her."

"I have a great mind to send for her at once, and to keep her about the countess, whose constitution she will be all the better acquainted with if she studies it beforehand. Do you know where I can send for her?"

"Faith," said the marquis, "she lives in a village, but I don't know which."

"But at least you know her name?"

"I can hardly remember it. Louise Boyard, I think, or Polliard, one or the other."

"How! have you not even retained the name?"

"I heard the story, that's all. Who the deuce can keep a name in his head which he hears in such a chance fashion?"

"But did the condition of the countess never occur to you?"

"It was so far away that I did not suppose you would send such a distance. I thought you were already provided."

"How can we set about to find her?"

"If that is all, I have a servant who knows people in that part of the country, and who knows how to go about things: if you like, he shall go in quest of her."

"If I like? This very moment."

The same evening the servant started on his errand with the count's instructions, not forgetting those of his master. He went at full speed. It may readily be supposed that he had not far to seek the woman he was to bring back with him; but he purposely kept away for three days, and at the end of this time Louise Goillard was installed in the chateau.

She was a woman of plain and severe exterior, who at once inspired confidence in everyone. The plots of the marquis and Madame de Bouillé thus throve with most baneful success; but an accident happened which threatened to nullify them, and, by causing a great disaster, to prevent a crime.

The countess, passing into her apartments, caught her foot in a carpet, and fell heavily on the floor. At the cries of a footman all the household was astir. The countess was carried to bed; the most intense alarm prevailed; but no bad consequences followed this accident, which produced only a further succession of visits from the neighbouring gentry. This happened about the end of the seventh month.

At length the moment of accouchement came. Everything had long before been arranged for the delivery, and nothing remained to be done. The marquis had employed all this time in strengthening Madame de Bouillé against her scruples. He often saw Louise Goillard in private, and gave her his instructions; but he perceived that the corruption of Baulieu, the house steward, was an essential factor. Baulieu was already half gained over by the interviews of the year preceding; a large sum of ready money and many promises did the rest. This wretch was not ashamed to join a plot against a master to whom he owed everything. The marchioness for her part, and always under the instigation of M. de Saint-Maixent, secured matters all round by bringing into the abominable plot the Quinet girls, her maids; so that there was nothing but treason and conspiracy against this worthy family among their upper servants, usually styled con-

fidential. Thus, having prepared matters, the conspirators awaited the event.

On the 16th of August 1641 the Countess de Saint-Géran was overtaken by the pangs of labour in the chapel of the chateau, where she was hearing mass. They carried her to her room before mass was over, her women ran around her, and the countess dowager with her own hands arranged on her head a cap of the pattern worn by ladies about to be confined—a cap which is not usually removed till some time later.

The pains recurred with terrible intensity. The count wept at his wife's cries. Many persons were present. The dowager's two daughters by her second marriage, one of whom, then sixteen years of age, afterwards married the Duke de Ventadour and was a party to the lawsuit, wished to be present at this accouchement, which was to perpetuate by a new scion an illustrious race near extinction. There were also Dame Saligny, sister of the late Marshal Saint-Géran, the Marquis de Saint-Maixent, and the Marchioness de Bouillé.

Everything seemed to favour the projects of these last two persons, who took an interest in the event of a very different character from that generally felt. As the pains produced no result, and the accouchement was of the most difficult nature, while the countess was near the last extremity, expresses

were sent to all the neighbouring parishes to offer prayers for the mother and the child; the Holy Sacrament was elevated in the churches at Moulins.

The midwife attended to everything herself. She maintained that the countess would be more comfortable if her slightest desires were instantly complied with. The countess herself never spoke a word, only interrupting the gloomy silence by heart-rending cries. All at once, Madame de Bouillé, who affected to be bustling about, pointed out that the presence of so many persons was what hindered the countess's accouchement, and, assuming an air of authority justified by fictitious tenderness, said that everyone must retire, leaving the patient in the hands of the persons who were absolutely necessary to her, and that, to remove any possible objections, the countess dowager her mother must set the example. The opportunity was made use of to remove the count from this harrowing spectacle, and everyone followed the countess dowager. Even the countess's own maids were not allowed to remain, being sent on errands which kept them out of the way. This further reason was given, that the eldest being scarcely fifteen, they were too young to be present on such an occasion. The only persons remaining by the bedside were the Marchioness de Bouillé, the midwife, and the two Quinet girls; the countess was thus in the hands of her most cruel enemies.

It was seven o'clock in the evening; the labours continued; the elder Quinet girl held the patient by the hand to soothe her. The count and the dowager sent incessantly to know the news. They were told that everything was going on well, and that shortly their wishes would be accomplished; but none of the servants were allowed to enter the room.

Three hours later, the midwife declared that the countess could not hold out any longer unless she got some rest. She made her swallow a liquor which was introduced into her mouth by spoonfuls. The countess fell into so deep a sleep that she seemed to be dead. The younger Quinet girl thought for a moment that they had killed her, and wept in a corner of the room, till Madame de Bouillé reassured her.

During this frightful night a shadowy figure prowled in the corridors, silently patrolled the rooms, and came now and then to the door of the bedroom, where he conferred in a low tone with the midwife and the Marchioness de Bouillé. This was the Marquis de Saint-Maixent, who gave his orders, encouraged his people, watched over every point of his plot, himself a prey to the agonies of nervousness which accompany the preparations for a great crime.

The dowager countess, owing to her great age, had been compelled to take some rest. The count

sat up, worn out with fatigue, in a downstairs room hard by that in which they were compassing the ruin of all most dear to him in the world.

The countess, in her profound lethargy, gave birth, without being aware of it, to a boy, who thus fell on his entry into the world into the hands of his enemies, his mother powerless to defend him by her cries and tears. The door was half opened, and a man who was waiting outside brought in; this was the major-domo Baulieu.

The midwife, pretending to afford the first necessary cares to the child, had taken it into a corner. Baulieu watched her movements, and springing upon her, pinioned her arms. The wretched woman dug her nails into the child's head. He snatched it from her, but the poor infant for long bore the marks of her claws.

Possibly the Marchioness de Bouillé could not nerve herself to the commission of so great a crime; but it seems more probable that the steward prevented the destruction of the child under the orders of M. de Saint-Maixent. The theory is that the marquis, mistrustful of the promise made him by Madame de Bouillé to marry him after the death of her husband, desired to keep the child to oblige her to keep her word, under threats of getting him acknowledged, if she proved faithless to him. No other adequate reason can be conjectured to deter-

mine a man of his character to take such great care of his victim.

Baulieu swaddled the child immediately, put it in a basket, hid it under his cloak, and went with his prey to find the marquis; they conferred together for some time, after which the house steward passed by a postern gate into the moat, thence to a terrace by which he reached a bridge leading into the park. This park had twelve gates, and he had the keys of all. He mounted a blood horse which he had left waiting behind a wall, and started off at full gallop. The same day he passed through the village of Escherolles, a league distant from Saint-Géran, where he stopped at the house of a nurse, wife of a glove-maker named Claude. This peasant woman gave her breast to the child; but the steward, not daring to stay in a village so near Saint-Géran, crossed the river Allier at the port de la Chaise, and calling at the house of a man named Boucaud, the good wife suckled the child for the second time; he then continued his journey in the direction of Auvergne.

The heat was excessive, his horse was done up, the child seemed uneasy. A carrier's cart passed him going to Riom; it was owned by a certain Paul Boithion of the town of Aigueperce, a common carrier on the road. Baulieu went alongside to put the child in the cart, which he entered himself,

carrying the infant on his knees. The horse followed, fastened by the bridle to the back of the cart.

In the conversation which he held with this man, Baulieu said that he should not take so much care of the child did it not belong to the most noble house in the Bourbonnais. They reached the village of Ché at midday. The mistress of the house where he put up, who was nursing an infant, consented to give some of her milk to the child. The poor creature was covered with blood; she warmed some water, stripped off its swaddling linen, washed it from head to foot, and swathed it up again more neatly.

The carrier then took them to Riom. When they got there, Baulieu got rid of him by giving a false meeting-place for their departure; left in the direction of the abbey of Lavoine, and reached the village of Descoutoux, in the mountains, between Lavoine and Thiers. The Marchioness de Bouillé had a chateau there where she occasionally spent some time.

The child was nursed at Descoutoux by Gabrielle Moini, who was paid a month in advance; but she only kept it a week or so, because they refused to tell her the father and mother and to refer her to a place where she might send reports of her charge. This woman having made these reasons public, no nurse could be found to take charge of the child,

which was removed from the village of Descoutoux. The persons who removed it took the highroad to Burgundy, crossing a densely wooded country, and here they lost their way.

The above particulars were subsequently proved by the nurses, the carrier, and others who made legal depositions. They are stated at length here, as they proved very important in the great lawsuit. The compilers of the case, into which we search for information, have however omitted to tell us how the absence of the major-domo was accounted for at the castle; probably the far-sighted marquis had got an excuse ready.

The countess's state of drowsiness continued till daybreak. She woke bathed in blood, completely exhausted, but yet with a sensation of comfort which convinced her that she had been delivered from her burden. Her first words were about her child; she wished to see it, kiss it; she asked where it was. The midwife coolly told her, whilst the girls who were by were filled with amazement at her audacity, that she had not been confined at all. The countess maintained the contrary, and as she grew very excited, the midwife strove to calm her, assuring her that in any case her delivery could not be long protracted, and that, judging from all the indications of the night, she would give birth to a boy. This promise comforted the count and the countess

dowager, but failed to satisfy the countess, who insisted that a child had been born.

The same day a scullery-maid met a woman going to the water's edge in the castle moat, with a parcel in her arms. She recognised the midwife, and asked what she was carrying and where she was going so early. The latter replied that she was very inquisitive, and that it was nothing at all; but the girl, laughingly pretending to be angry at this answer, pulled open one of the ends of the parcel before the midwife had time to stop her, and exposed to view some linen soaked in blood.

"Madame has been confined, then?" she said to the matron.

"No," replied she briskly, "she has not."

The girl was unconvinced, and said, "How do you mean that she has not, when madame the marchioness, who was there, says she has?"

The matron in great confusion replied, "She must have a very long tongue, if she said so."

The girl's evidence was later found most important.

The countess's uneasiness made her worse the next day. She implored with sighs and tears at least to be told what had become of her child, steadily maintaining that she was not mistaken when she assured them that she had given birth to one. The midwife with great effrontery told her that the

new moon was unfavourable to childbirth, and that she must wait for the wane, when it would be easier as matters were already prepared.

Invalids' fancies do not obtain much credence; still, the persistence of the countess would have convinced everyone in the long run, had not the dowager said that she remembered at the end of the ninth month of one of her own pregnancies she had all the premonitory symptoms of lying in, but they proved false, and in fact the accouchement took place three months later.

This piece of news inspired great confidence. The marquis and Madame de Bouillé did all in their power to confirm it, but the countess obstinately refused to listen to it, and her passionate transports of grief gave rise to the greatest anxiety. The midwife, who knew not how to gain time, and was losing all hope in face of the countess's persistence, was almost frightened out of her wits; she entered into medical details, and finally said that some violent exercise must be taken to induce labour. The countess, still unconvinced, refused to obey this order; but the count, the dowager, and all the family entreated her so earnestly that she gave way.

They put her in a close carriage, and drove her a whole day over ploughed fields, by the roughest and hardest roads. She was so shaken that she lost the power of breathing; it required all the strength

of her constitution to support this barbarous treatment in the delicate condition of a lady so recently confined. They put her to bed again after this cruel drive, and seeing that nobody took her view, she threw herself into the arms of Providence, and consoled herself by religion; the midwife administered violent remedies to deprive her of milk; she got over all these attempts to murder her, and slowly got better.

Time, which heals the deepest affliction, gradually soothed that of the countess; her grief nevertheless burst out periodically on the slightest cause; but eventually it died out, till the following events rekindled it.

There had been in Paris a fencing-master who used to boast that he had a brother in the service of a great house. This fencing-master had married a certain Marie Pigoreau, daughter of an actor. He had recently died in poor circumstances, leaving her a widow with two children. This woman Pigoreau did not enjoy the best of characters, and no one knew how she made a living, when all at once, after some short absences from home and visit from a man who came in the evening, his face muffled in his cloak, she launched out into a more expensive style of living; the neighbours saw in her house costly clothes, fine swaddling-clothes, and at last it became known that she was nursing a strange child.

About the same time it also transpired that she had a deposit of two thousand livres in the hands of a grocer in the quarter, named Raguenet; some days later, as the child's baptism had doubtless been put off for fear of betraying his origin, Pigoreau had him christened at St. Jean en Grève. She did not invite any of the neighbours to the function, and gave parents' names of her own choosing at the church. For godfather she selected the parish sexton, named Paul Marmiou, who gave the child the name of Bernard. La Pigoreau remained in a confessional during the ceremony, and gave the man ten sous. The godmother was Jeanne Chevalier, a poor woman of the parish.

The entry in the register was as follows:—

"On the seventh day of March one thousand six hundred and forty-two was baptized Bernard, son of . . . and . . . , his godfather being Paul Marmiou, day labourer and servant of this parish, and his godmother Jeanne Chevalier, widow of Pierre Thibou."

A few days afterwards la Pigoreau put out the child to nurse in the village of Torcy en Brie, with a woman who had been her godmother, whose husband was called Paillard. She gave out that it was a child of quality which had been entrusted to her,

and that she should not hesitate, if such a thing were necessary, to save its life by the loss of one of her own children. The nurse did not keep it long, because she fell ill; la Pigoreau went to fetch the child away, lamenting this accident, and further saying that she regretted it all the more, as the nurse would have earned enough to make her comfortable for the rest of her life. She put the infant out again in the same village, with the widow of a peasant named Marc Péguin. The monthly wage was regularly paid, and the child brought up as one of rank. La Pigoreau further told the woman that it was the son of a great nobleman, and would later make the fortunes of those who served him. An elderly man, whom the people supposed to be the child's father, but who Pigoreau assured them was her brother-in-law, often came to see him.

When the child was eighteen months old, la Pigoreau took him away and weaned him. Of the two by her husband the elder was called Antoine, the second would have been called Henri if he had lived; but he was born on the 9th of August 1639, after the death of his father, who was killed in June of the same year, and died shortly after his birth. La Pigoreau thought fit to give the name and condition of this second son to the stranger, and thus bury for ever the secret of his birth. With this end in view, she left the quarter where she lived, and

removed to conceal herself in another parish where she was not known. The child was brought up under the name and style of Henri, second son of la Pigoreau, till he was two and a half years of age; but at this time, whether she was not engaged to keep it any longer, or whether she had spent the two thousand livres deposited with the grocer Raguenet, and could get no more from the principals, she determined to get rid of it.

Her gossips used to tell this woman that she cared but little for her eldest son, because she was very confident of the second one making his fortune, and that if she were obliged to give up one of them, she had better keep the younger, who was a beautiful boy. To this she would reply that the matter did not depend upon her; that the boy's godfather was an uncle in good circumstances, who would not charge himself with any other child. She often mentioned this uncle, her brother-in-law, she said, who was major-domo in a great house.

One morning, the hall porter at the hôtel de Saint-Géran came to Baulieu and told him that a woman carrying a child was asking for him at the wicket gate; this Baulieu was, in fact, the brother of the fencing-master, and godfather to Pigoreau's second son. It is now supposed that he was the unknown person who had placed the child of quality with her, and who used to go and see him at his nurse's. La

Pigoreau gave him a long account of her situation. The major-domo took the child with some emotion, and told la Pigoreau to wait his answer a short distance off, in a place which he pointed out.

Baulieu's wife made a great outcry at the first proposal of an increase of family; but he succeeded in pacifying her by pointing out the necessities of his sister-in-law, and how easy and inexpensive it was to do this good work in such a house as the count's. He went to his master and mistress to ask permission to bring up this child in their hotel; a kind of feeling entered into the charge he was undertaking which in some measure lessened the weight on his conscience.

The count and countess at first opposed this project; telling him that having already five children he ought not to burden himself with any more, but he petitioned so earnestly that he obtained what he wanted. The countess wished to see it, and as she was about to start for Moulins she ordered it to be put in her women's coach; when it was shown her, she cried out, "What a lovely child!" The boy was fair, with large blue eyes and very regular features. She gave him a hundred caresses, which the child returned very prettily. She at once took a great fancy to him, and said to Baulieu, "I shall not put him in my women's coach; I shall put him in my own."

After they arrived at the château of Saint-Géran,

her affection for Henri, the name retained by the child, increased day by day. She often contemplated him with sadness, then embraced him with tenderness, and kept him long on her bosom. The count shared this affection for the supposed nephew of Baulieu, who was adopted, so to speak, and brought up like a child of quality.

The Marquis de Saint-Maixent and Madame de Bouillé had not married, although the old Marquis de Bouillé had long been dead. It appeared that they had given up this scheme. The marchioness no doubt felt scruples about it, and the marquis was deterred from marriage by his profligate habits. It is moreover supposed that other engagements and heavy bribes compensated the loss he derived from the marchioness's breach of faith.

He was a man about town at that period, and was making love to the demoiselle Jacqueline de la Garde; he had succeeded in gaining her affections, and brought matters to such a point that she no longer refused her favours except on the grounds of her pregnancy and the danger of an indiscretion. The marquis then offered to introduce to her a matron who could deliver women without the pangs of labour, and who had a very successful practice. The same Jacqueline de la Garde further gave evidence at the trial that M. de Saint-Maixent had often boasted, as of a scientific intrigue, of having

spirited away the son of a governor of a province and grandson of a marshal of France; that he spoke of the Marchioness de Bouillé, said that he had made her rich, and that it was to him she owed her great wealth; and further, that one day having taken her to a pretty country seat which belonged to him, she praised its beauty, saying "*c'était un beau lieu*"; he replied by a pun on a man's name, saying that he knew another Baulieu who had enabled him to make a fortune of five hundred thousand crowns. He also said to Jadelon, sieur de la Barbesange, when posting with him from Paris, that the Countess de Saint-Géran had been delivered of a son who was in his power.

The marquis had not seen Madame de Bouillé for a long time; a common danger reunited them. They had both learned with terror the presence of Henri at the hotel de Saint-Géran. They consulted about this; the marquis undertook to cut the danger short. However, he dared put in practice nothing overtly against the child, a matter still more difficult just then, inasmuch as some particulars of his discreditable adventures had leaked out, and the Saint-Géran family received him more than coldly.

Baulieu, who witnessed every day the tenderness of the count and countess for the boy Henri, had been a hundred times on the point of giving himself up and confessing everything. He was torn to pieces

with remorse. Remarks escaped him which he thought he might make without ulterior consequences, seeing the lapse of time, but they were noted and commented on. Sometimes he would say that he held in his hand the life and honour of Madame the Marchioness de Bouillé; sometimes that the count and countess had more reasons than they knew of for loving Henri. One day he put a case of conscience to a confessor, thus: "Whether a man who had been concerned in the abduction of a child could not satisfy his conscience by restoring him to his father and mother without telling them who he was?" What answer the confessor made is not known, but apparently it was not what the major-domo wanted. He replied to a magistrate of Moulins, who congratulated him on having a nephew whom his masters overburdened with kind treatment, that they ought to love him, since he was nearly related to them.

These remarks were noticed by others than those principally concerned. One day a wine merchant came to propose to Baulieu the purchase of a pipe of Spanish wine, of which he gave him a sample bottle; in the evening he was taken violently ill. They carried him to bed, where he writhed, uttering horrible cries. One sole thought possessed him when his sufferings left him a lucid interval, and in his agony he repeated over and over again that he

wished to implore pardon from the count and countess for a great injury which he had done them. The people round about him told him that was a trifle, and that he ought not to let it embitter his last moments, but he begged so piteously that he got them to promise that they should be sent for.

The count thought it was some trifling irregularity, some misappropriation in the house accounts; and fearing to hasten the death of the sufferer by the shame of the confession of a fault, he sent word that he heartily forgave him, that he might die tranquil, and refused to see him. Baulieu expired, taking his secret with him. This happened in 1648.

The child was then seven years old. His charming manners grew with his age, and the count and countess felt their love for him increase. They caused him to be taught dancing and fencing, put him into breeches and hose, and a page's suit of their livery, in which capacity he served them. The marquis turned his attack to this quarter. He was doubtless preparing some plot as criminal as the preceding, when justice overtook him for some other great crimes of which he had been guilty. He was arrested one day in the street when conversing with one of the Saint-Géran footmen, and taken to the Conciergerie of the Palace of Justice.

Whether owing to these occurrences, or to

grounds for suspicion before mentioned, certain reports spread in the Bourbonnais embodying some of the real facts; portions of them reached the ears of the count and countess, but they had only the effect of renewing their grief without furnishing a clue to the truth.

Meanwhile, the count went to take the waters at Vichy. The countess and Madame de Bouillé followed him, and there they chanced to encounter Louise Goillard, the midwife. This woman renewed her acquaintance with the house, and in particular often visited the Marchioness de Bouillé. One day the countess, unexpectedly entering the marchioness's room, found them both conversing in an undertone. They stopped talking immediately, and appeared disconcerted.

The countess noticed this without attaching any importance to it, and asked the subject of their conversation.

"Oh, nothing," said the marchioness.

"But what is it?" insisted the countess, seeing that she blushed.

The marchioness, no longer able to evade the question, and feeling her difficulties increase, replied—

"Dame Louise is praising my brother for bearing no ill-will to her."

"Why?" said the countess, turning to the mid-

wife,—"why should you fear any ill-will on the part of my husband?"

"I was afraid," said Louise Goillard awkwardly, "that he might have taken a dislike to me on account of all that happened when you expected to be confined."

The obscurity of these words and embarrassment of the two women produced a lively effect upon the countess; but she controlled herself and let the subject drop. Her agitation, however, did not escape the notice of the marchioness, who the next day had horses put to her coach and retired to her estate of Lavoine. This clumsy proceeding strengthened suspicion.

The first determination of the countess was to arrest Louise Goillard; but she saw that in so serious a matter every step must be taken with precaution. She consulted the count and the countess dowager. They quietly summoned the midwife, to question her without any preliminaries. She prevaricated and contradicted herself over and over again; moreover, her state of terror alone sufficed to convict her of a crime. They handed her over to the law, and the Count de Saint-Géran filed an information before the vice-seneschal of Moulins.

The midwife underwent a first interrogatory. She confessed the truth of the accouchement, but she added that the countess had given birth to a still-born

daughter, which she had buried under a stone near the step of the barn in the back yard. The judge, accompanied by a physician and a surgeon, repaired to the place, where he found neither stone, nor fœtus, nor any indications of an interment. They searched unsuccessfully in other places.

When the dowager countess heard this statement, she demanded that this horrible woman should be put on her trial. The civil lieutenant, in the absence of the criminal lieutenant, commenced the proceedings.

In a second interrogation, Louise Goillard positively declared that the countess had never been confined;

In a third, that she had been delivered of a mole;

In a fourth, that she had been confined of a male infant, which Baulieu had carried away in a basket;

And in a fifth, in which she answered from the dock, she maintained that her evidence of the countess's accouchement had been extorted from her by violence. She made no charges against either Madame de Bouillé or the Marquis de Saint-Maixent. On the other hand, no sooner was she under lock and key than she despatched her son Guillemin to the marchioness to inform her that she was arrested. The marchioness recognised how threatening things were, and was in a state of con-

sternation; she immediately sent the sieur de la Foresterie, her steward, to the lieutenant-general, her counsel, a mortal enemy of the count, that he might advise her in this conjuncture, and suggest a means for helping the matron without appearing openly in the matter. The lieutenant's advice was to quash the proceedings and obtain an injunction against the continuance of the preliminaries to the action. The marchioness spent a large sum of money, and obtained this injunction; but it was immediately reversed, and the bar to the suit removed.

La Foresterie was then ordered to pass to Riom, where the sisters Quinet lived, and to bribe them heavily to secrecy. The elder one, on leaving the marchioness's service, had shaken her fist in her face, feeling secure with the secrets in her knowledge, and told her that she would repent having dismissed her and her sister, and that she would make a clean breast of the whole affair, even were she to be hung first. These girls then sent word that they wished to enter her service again; that the countess had promised them handsome terms if they would speak; and that they had even been questioned in her name by a Capuchin superior, but that they said nothing, in order to give time to prepare an answer for them. The marchioness found herself obliged to take back the girls; she kept the younger,

and married the elder to Delisle, her house steward. But la Forestrie, finding himself in this network of intrigue, grew disgusted at serving such a mistress, and left her house. The marchioness told him on his departure that if he were so indiscreet as to repeat a word of what he had learned from the Quinet girls, she would punish him with a hundred poniard stabs from her major-domo Delisle. Having thus fortified her position, she thought herself secure against any hostile steps; but it happened that a certain Prudent Berger, gentleman and page to the Marquis de Saint-Maixent, who enjoyed his master's confidence and went to see him in the Conciergerie, where he was imprisoned, threw some strange light on this affair. His master had narrated to him all the particulars of the accouchement of the countess and of the abduction of the child.

"I am astonished, my lord," replied the page, "that having so many dangerous affairs on hand, you did not relieve your conscience of this one."

"I intend," replied the marquis, "to restore this child to his father: I have been ordered to do so by a Capuchin to whom I confessed having carried off from the midst of the family, without their knowing it, a grandson of a marshal of France and son of a governor of a province."

The marquis had at that time permission to go out from prison occasionally on his parole. This

will not surprise anyone acquainted with the ideas which prevailed at that period on the honour of a nobleman, even the greatest criminal. The marquis, profiting by this facility, took the page to see a child of about seven years of age, fair and with a beautiful countenance.

"Page," said he, "look well at this child, so that you may know him again when I shall send you to inquire about him."

He then informed him that this was the Count de Saint-Géran's son whom he had carried away.

Information of these matters coming to the ears of justice, decisive proofs were hoped for; but this happened just when other criminal informations were lodged against the marquis, which left him helpless to prevent the exposure of his crimes. Police officers were despatched in all haste to the Conciergerie; they were stopped by the gaolers, who told them that the marquis, feeling ill, was engaged with a priest who was administering the sacraments to him. As they insisted on seeing him, the warders approached the cell: the priest came out, crying that persons must be sought to whom the sick man had a secret to reveal; that he was in a desperate state, and said he had just poisoned himself; all entered the cell.

M. de Saint-Maixent was writhing on a pallet, in a pitiable condition, sometimes shrieking like a wild

beast, sometimes stammering disconnected words. All that the officers could hear was—

"Monsieur le Comte . . . call . . . the Countess . . . de Saint-Géran . . . let them come. . . ." The officers earnestly begged him to try to be more explicit.

The marquis had another fit; when he opened his eyes, he said—

"Send for the countess . . . let them forgive me . . . I wish to tell them everything." The police officers asked him to speak; one even told him that the count was there. The marquis feebly murmured—

"I am going to tell you——" Then he gave a loud cry and fell back dead.

It thus seemed as if fate took pains to close every mouth from which the truth might escape. Still, this avowal of a deathbed revelation to be made to the Count de Saint-Géran and the deposition of the priest who had administered the last sacraments formed a strong link in the chain of evidence.

The judge of first instruction, collecting all the information he had got, made a report the weight of which was overwhelming. The carters, the nurse, the domestic servants, all gave accounts consistent with each other; the route and the various adventures of the child were plainly detailed, from its birth till its arrival at the village of Descoutoux.

Justice, thus tracing crime to its sources, had no option but to issue a warrant for the arrest of the Marchioness de Bouillé; but it seems probable that it was not served owing to the strenuous efforts of the Count de Saint-Géran, who could not bring himself to ruin his sister, seeing that her dishonour would have been reflected on him. The marchioness hid her remorse in solitude, and appeared again no more. She died shortly after, carrying the weight of her secret till she drew her last breath.

The judge of Moulins at length pronounced sentence on the midwife, whom he declared arraigned and convicted of having suppressed the child born to the countess; for which he condemned her to be tortured and then hanged. The matron lodged an appeal against this sentence, and the case was referred to the Conciergerie.

No sooner had the count and countess seen the successive proofs of the procedure, than tenderness and natural feelings accomplished the rest. They no longer doubted that their page was their son; they stripped him at once of his livery and gave him his rank and prerogatives, under the title of the Count de la Palice.

Meanwhile, a private person named Séqueville informed the countess that he had made a very important discovery; that a child had been baptized in 1642 at St. Jean-en-Grève, and that a woman

named Marie Pigoreau had taken a leading part in the affair. Thereupon inquiries were made, and it was discovered that this child had been nursed in the village of Torcy. The count obtained a warrant which enabled him to get evidence before the judge of Torcy; nothing was left undone to elicit the whole truth; he also obtained a warrant through which he obtained more information, and published a monitory. The elder of the Quinet girls on this told the Marquis de Canillac that the count was searching at a distance for things very near him. The truth shone out with great lustre through these new facts which gushed from all this fresh information. The child, exhibited in the presence of a legal commissary to the nurses and witnesses of Torcy, was identified, as much by the scars left by the midwife's nails on his head, as by his fair hair and blue eyes. This ineffaceable vestige of the woman's cruelty was the principal proof; the witnesses testified that la Pigoreau, when she visited this child with a man who appeared to be of condition, always asserted that he was the son of a great nobleman who had been entrusted to her care, and that she hoped he would make her fortune and that of those who had reared him.

The child's godfather, Paul Marmiou, a common labourer; the grocer Raguenet, who had charge of the two thousand livres; the servant of la Pigoreau,

who had heard her say that the count was obliged to take this child; the witnesses who proved that la Pigoreau had told them that the child was too well born to wear a page's livery, all furnished convincing proofs; but others were forthcoming.

It was at la Pigoreau's that the Marquis de Saint-Maixent, living then at the hotel de Saint-Géran, went to see the child, kept in her house as if it were hers; Prudent Berger, the marquis's page, perfectly well remembered la Pigoreau, and also the child, whom he had seen at her house and whose history the marquis had related to him. Finally, many other witnesses heard in the course of the case, both before the three chambers of nobles, clergy, and the tiers état, and before the judges of Torcy, Cusset, and other local magistrates, made the facts so clear and conclusive in favour of the legitimacy of the young count, that it was impossible to avoid impeaching the guilty parties. The count ordered the summons in person of la Pigoreau, who had not been compromised in the original preliminary proceedings. This drastic measure threw the intriguing woman on her beam ends, but she strove hard to right herself.

The widowed Duchess de Ventadour, daughter by her mother's second marriage of the Countess dowager of Saint-Géran, and half-sister of the count, and the Countess de Lude, daughter of the March-

ioness de Bouillé, from whom the young count carried away the Saint-Géran inheritance, were very warm in the matter, and spoke of disputing the judgment. La Pigoreau went to see them, and joined in concert with them.

Then commenced this famous lawsuit, which long occupied all France, and is parallel in some respects, but not in the time occupied in the hearing, to the case heard by Solomon, in which one child was claimed by two mothers.

The Marquis de Saint-Maixent and Madame de Bouillé being dead, were naturally no parties to the suit, which was fought against the Saint-Géran family by la Pigoreau and Mesdames du Lude and de Ventadour. These ladies no doubt acted in good faith, at first at any rate, in refusing to believe the crime; for if they had originally known the truth it is incredible that they could have fought the case so long and so obstinately.

They first of all went to the aid of the midwife, who had fallen sick in prison; they then consulted together, and resolved as follows:—

That the accused should appeal against criminal proceedings;

That la Pigoreau should lodge a civil petition against the judgments which ordered her arrest and the confronting of witnesses;

That they should appeal against the abuse of

obtaining and publishing monitories, and lodge an interpleader against the sentence of the judge of first instruction, who had condemned the matron to capital punishment;

And that finally, to carry the war into the enemy's camp, la Pigoreau should impugn the maternity of the countess, claiming the child as her own; and that the ladies should depose that the countess's accouchement was an imposture invented to cause it to be supposed that she had given birth to a child.

For more safety and apparent absence of collusion Mesdames du Lude and de Ventadour pretended to have no communication with la Pigoreau.

About this time the midwife died in prison, from an illness which vexation and remorse had aggravated. After her death, her son Guillemin confessed that she had often told him that the countess had given birth to a son whom Baulieu had carried off, and that the child entrusted to Baulieu at the château Saint-Gérin was the same as the one recovered; the youth added that he had concealed this fact so long as it might injure his mother, and he further stated that the ladies de Ventadour and du Lude had helped her in prison with money and advice—another strong piece of presumptive evidence.

The petitions of the accused and the interpleadings of Mesdames du Lude and de Ventadour were discussed in seven hearings, before three courts con-

vened. The suit proceeded with all the languor and chicanery of the period.

After long and specious arguments, the attorney-general Bijnon gave his decision in favour of the Count and Countess of Saint-Géran, concluding thus:—

"The court rejects the civil appeal of la Pigoreau, and all the opposition and appeals of the appellants and the defendants; condemns them to fine and in costs; and seeing that the charges against la Pigoreau were of a serious nature, and that a personal summons had been decreed against her, orders her committal, recommending her to the indulgence of the court."

By a judgment given in a sitting at the Tournelle by M. de Mesmes, on the 18th of August 1657, the appellant ladies' and the defendants' opposition was rejected with fine and costs. La Pigoreau was forbidden to leave the city and suburbs of Paris under penalty of summary conviction. The judgment in the case followed the rejection of the appeal.

This reverse at first extinguished the litigation of Mesdames du Lude and de Ventadour, but it soon revived more briskly than ever. These ladies, who had taken la Pigoreau in their coach to all the hearings, prompted her, in order to procrastinate, to file a fresh petition, in which she demanded the confrontment of all the witnesses to the pregnancy

and the confinement. On hearing this petition, the court gave on the 28th of August 1658 a decree ordering the confrontment, but on condition that for three days previously la Pigoreau should deliver herself a prisoner in the Conciergerie.

This judgment, the consequences of which greatly alarmed la Pigoreau, produced such an effect upon her that, after having weighed the interest she had in the suit, which she would lose by flight, against the danger to her life if she ventured her person into the hands of justice, she abandoned her false plea of maternity, and took refuge abroad. This last circumstance was a heavy blow to Mesdames du Lude and de Ventadour; but they were not at the end of their resources and their obstinacy.

Contempt of court being decreed against la Pigoreau, and the case being got up against the other defendants, the Count de Saint-Géran left for the Bourbonnais, to put in execution the order to confront the witnesses. Scarcely had he arrived in the province when he was obliged to interrupt his work to receive the king and the queen mother, who were returning from Lyons and passing through Moulins. He presented the Count de la Palice to their Majesties as his son; they received him as such. But during the visit of the king and queen the Count de Saint-Géran fell ill, over fatigued, no doubt, by the trouble he had taken to

give them a suitable reception, over and above the worry of his own affairs.

During his illness, which only lasted a week, he made in his will a new acknowledgment of his son, naming his executors M. de Barrière, intendant of the province, and the sieur Vialet, treasurer of France, desiring them to bring the lawsuit to an end. His last words were for his wife and child; his only regret that he had not been able to terminate this affair. He died on the 31st of January 1659.

The maternal tenderness of the countess did not need stimulating by the injunctions of her husband, and she took up the suit with energy. The ladies de Ventadour and du Lude obtained by default letters of administration as heiresses without liability, which were granted out of the Châtelet. At the same time they appealed against the judgment of the lieutenant-general of the Bourbonnais, giving the tutelage of the young count to the countess his mother, and his guardianship to sieur de Bompré. The countess, on her side, interpleaded an appeal against the granting of letters of administration without liability, and did all in her power to bring back the case to the Tournelle. The other ladies carried their appeal to the high court, pleading that they were not parties to the lawsuit in the Tournelle.

It would serve no purpose to follow the obscure

labyrinth of legal procedure of that period, and to recite all the marches and countermarches which legal subtlety suggested to the litigants. At the end of three years, on the 9th of April 1661, the countess obtained a judgment by which the king in person—

> "*Assuming to his own decision the civil suit pending at the Tournelle, as well as the appeals pled by both parties, and the last petition of Mesdames du Lude and de Ventadour, sends back the whole case to the three assembled chambers of the States General, to be by them decided on its merits either jointly or separately, as they may deem fit.*"

The countess thus returned to her first battlefield. Legal science produced an immense quantity of manuscript, barristers and attorneys greatly distinguishing themselves in their calling. After an interminable hearing, and pleadings longer and more complicated than ever, which however did not bamboozle the court, judgment was pronounced in conformity with the summing up of the attorney-general, thus:—

"That passing over the petition of Mesdames Marie de la Guiche and Eléonore de Bouillé, on the grounds," etc. etc.;

"Evidence taken," etc.;

"Appeals, judgments annulled," etc.;

"With regard to the petition of the late Claude de la Guiche and Suzanne de Longaunay, dated 12th August 1658,"

"Ordered,

"That the rule be made absolute;

"Which being done, Bernard de la Guiche is pronounced, maintained, and declared the lawfully born and legitimate son of Claude de la Guiche and Suzanne de Longaunay; in possession and enjoyment of the name and arms of the house of Guiche, and of all the goods left by Claude de la Guiche, his father; and Marie de la Guiche and Eléonore de Bouillé are interdicted from interfering with him;

"The petitions of Eléonore de Bouillé and Marie de la Guiche, dated 4th June 1664, 4th August 1665, 6th January, 10th February, 12th March, 15th April, and 2nd June, 1666, are dismissed with costs;

"Declared,

"That the defaults against la Pigoreau are confirmed; and that she, arraigned and convicted of the offences imputed to her, is condemned to be hung and strangled at a gallows erected in the Place de Grève in this city, if taken and apprehended; otherwise, in effigy at a gallows erected in the Place de Grève aforesaid; that all her property subject to confiscation is seized and confiscated from whom-

soever may be in possession of it; on which property and other not subject to confiscation, is levied a fine of eight hundred Paris livres, to be paid to the King, and applied to the maintenance of prisoners in the Conciergerie of the Palace of Justice, and to the costs."

Possibly a more obstinate legal contest was never waged, on both sides, but especially by those who lost it. The countess, who played the part of the true mother in the Bible, had the case so much to heart that she often told the judges, when pleading her cause, that if her son were not recognised as such, she would marry him, and convey all her property to him.

The young Count de la Palice became Count de Saint-Géran through the death of his father, married, in 1667, Claude Françoise Madeleine de Farignies, only daughter of François de Monfreville and of Marguerite Jourdain de Carbone de Canisi. He had only one daughter, born in 1688, who became a nun. He died at the age of fifty-five years, and thus this illustrious family became extinct.

MURAT

MURAT
1815

I

TOULON

ON the 18th June, 1815, at the very moment when the destiny of Europe was being decided at Waterloo, a man dressed like a beggar was silently following the road from Toulon to Marseilles.

Arrived at the entrance of the Gorge of Ollioulles, he halted on a little eminence from which he could see all the surrounding country; then either because he had reached the end of his journey, or because, before attempting that forbidding, sombre pass which is called the Thermopylæ of Provence, he wished to enjoy the magnificent view which spread to the southern horizon a little longer, he went and sat down on the edge of the ditch which bordered the road, turning his back on the mountains which rise like an amphitheatre to the north of the town, and having at his feet a rich plain cov-

ered with tropical vegetation, exotics of a conservatory, trees and flowers quite unknown in any other part of France.

Beyond this plain, glittering in the last rays of the sun, pale and motionless as a mirror lay the sea, and on the surface of the water glided one brig-of-war, which, taking advantage of a fresh land breeze, had all sails spread, and was bowling along rapidly, making for Italian seas. The beggar followed it eagerly with his eyes until it disappeared between the Cape of Gien and the first of the islands of Hyères, then as the white apparition vanished he sighed deeply, let his head fall into his hands, and remained motionless and absorbed in his reflections, until the tramplings of a cavalcade made him start; he looked up, shook back his long black hair, as if he wished to get rid of the gloomy thoughts which were overwhelming him, and, looking at the entrance to the gorge from whence the noise came, he soon saw two riders appear, who were no doubt well known to him, for, drawing himself up to his full height, he let fall the stick he was carrying, and folding his arms he turned towards them. On their side the new-comers had hardly seen him before they halted, and the foremost dismounted, threw his bridle to his companion, and uncovering, though fifty paces from the man in rags, advanced respectfully towards him. The beggar allowed him to

approach with an air of sombre dignity and without a single movement; then, when he was quite near—

"Well, marshal, have you news for me?" said the beggar.

"Yes, sire," said the other sadly.

"And what are they?"

"Such that I could wish it were anyone but myself to announce them to your Majesty——"

"So the Emperor refuses my services! He forgets the victories of Aboukir, Eylau, and Moscow?"

"No, sire; but he remembers the treaty of Naples, the taking of Reggio, and the declaration of war of the viceroy of Italy."

The beggar struck his forehead.

"Yes, yes! I daresay he thinks I deserve his reproaches, and yet it seems to me that he ought to remember that there are two men in me—the soldier whom he made his brother, and the brother whom he made a king. . . . Yes, as brother I have treated him ill—very ill, but as king, upon my soul, I could not have acted differently. . . . I had to choose between my sword and my crown, and between a regiment and a people. Listen, Brune: you do not know how it all happened. There was an English fleet, the guns of which were growling in the port, there was a Neapolitan population howling in the streets. If I had been alone, I would have passed through the fleet with one boat, through the

crowd with my sword alone, but I had a wife and children. Yet I hesitated; the idea of being called traitor and deserter caused me to shed more tears than the loss of my throne, or perhaps the death of those I love best, will ever wring from me. . . . And so he will have nothing more to do with me? He refuses me as general, captain, private? Then what is left for me to do?"

"Sire, your Majesty must leave France immediately."

"And if I don't obey?"

"My orders are to arrest you and deliver you up to a court-martial!"

"Old comrade, you will not do that?"

"I shall do it, praying God to strike me dead in the moment I lay hands on you!"

"That's you all over, Brune. You have been able to remain a good, loyal fellow. He did not give you a kingdom, he did not encircle your brow with a band of iron which men call a crown and which drives one mad; he did not place you between your conscience and your family. So I must leave France, begin my vagabond life again, and say farewell to Toulon, which recalls so many memories to me! See, Brune," continued Murat, leaning on the arm of the marshal, "are not the pines yonder as fine as any at the Villa Pamfili, the palms as imposing as any at Cairo, the mountains as grand

as any range in the Tyrol? Look to your left, is not Cape Gien something like Castellamare and Sorrento—leaving out Vesuvius? And see, Saint-Mandrier at the farthest point of the gulf, is it not like my rock of Capri, which Lamarque juggled away so cleverly from that idiot of a Sir Hudson Lowe? My God! and I must leave all this! Is there no way of remaining on this little corner of French ground—tell me, Brune!"

"You'll break my heart, sire!" answered the marshal.

"Well, we'll say no more about it. What news?"

"The Emperor has left Paris to join the army. They must be fighting now——"

"Fighting now and I not there! Oh, I feel I could have been of use to him on this battlefield. How I would have gloried in charging those miserable Prussians and dastardly English! Brune, give me a passport, I'll go at full speed, I'll reach the army, I will make myself known to some colonel, I shall say, 'Give me your regiment.' I'll charge at its head, and if the Emperor does not clasp my hand to-night, I'll blow my brains out, I swear I will. Do what I ask, Brune, and however it may end, my eternal gratitude will be yours!"

"I cannot, sire."

"Well, well, say no more about it."

"And your Majesty is going to leave France?"

"I don't know. Obey your orders, marshal, and if you come across me again, have me arrested. That's another way of doing something for me. Life is a heavy burden nowadays. He who will relieve me of it will be welcome. . . . Good-bye, Brune."

He held out his hand to the marshal, who tried to kiss it; but Murat opened his arms, the two old comrades held each other fast for a moment, with swelling hearts and eyes full of tears; then at last they parted. Brune remounted his horse, Murat picked up his stick again, and the two men went away in opposite directions, one to meet his death by assassination at Avignon, the other to be shot at Pizzo. Meanwhile, like Richard III, Napoleon was bartering his crown against a horse at Waterloo.

After the interview that has just been related, Murat took refuge with his nephew, who was called Bonafoux, and who was captain of a frigate; but this retreat could only be temporary, for the relationship would inevitably awake the suspicions of the authorities. In consequence, Bonafoux set about finding a more secret place of refuge for his uncle. He hit on one of his friends, an avocat, a man famed for his integrity, and that very evening Bonafoux went to see him.

After chatting on general subjects, he asked his friend if he had not a house at the seaside, and receiving an affirmative answer, he invited himself to breakfast there the next day; the proposal naturally enough was agreed to with pleasure. The next day at the appointed hour Bonafoux arrived at Bonette, which was the name of the country house where M. Marouin's wife and daughter were staying. M. Marouin himself was kept by his work at Toulon. After the ordinary greetings, Bonafoux stepped to the window, beckoning to Marouin to rejoin him.

"I thought," he said uneasily, "that your house was by the sea."

"We are hardly ten minutes' walk from it."

"But it is not in sight."

"That hill prevents you from seeing it."

"May we go for a stroll on the beach before breakfast is served?"

"By all means. Well, your horse is still saddled. I will order mine—I will come back for you."

Marouin went out. Bonafoux remained at the window, absorbed in his thoughts. The ladies of the house, occupied in preparations for the meal, did not observe, or did not appear to observe, his preoccupation. In five minutes Marouin came back. He was ready to start. The avocat and his friend mounted their horses and rode quickly down to the

sea. On the beach the captain slackened his pace, and riding along the shore for about half an hour, he seemed to be examining the bearings of the coast with great attention. Marouin followed without inquiring into his investigations, which seemed natural enough for a naval officer.

After about an hour the two men went back to the house.

Marouin wished to have the horses unsaddled, but Bonafoux objected, saying that he must go back to Toulon immediately after lunch. Indeed, the coffee was hardly finished before he rose and took leave of his hosts. Marouin, called back to town by his work, mounted his horse too, and the two friends rode back to Toulon together. After riding along for ten minutes, Bonafoux went close to his companion and touched him on the thigh—

"Marouin," he said, "I have an important secret to confide to you."

"Speak, captain. After a father confessor, you know there is no one so discreet as a notary, and after a notary an avocat."

"You can quite understand that I did not come to your country house just for the pleasure of the ride. A more important object, a serious responsibility, preoccupied me; I have chosen you out of all my friends, believing that you were devoted enough to me to render me a great service."

"You did well, captain."

"Let us go straight to the point, as men who respect and trust each other should do. My uncle, King Joachim, is proscribed, he has taken refuge with me; but he cannot remain there, for I am the first person they will suspect. Your house is in an isolated position, and consequently we could not find a better retreat for him. You must put it at our disposal until events enable the king to come to some decision."

"It is at your service," said Marouin.

"Right. My uncle shall sleep there to-night."

"But at least give me time to make some preparations worthy of my royal guest."

"My poor Marouin, you are giving yourself unnecessary trouble, and making a vexatious delay for us. King Joachim is no longer accustomed to palaces and courtiers; he is only too happy nowadays to find a cottage with a friend in it; besides, I have let him know about it, so sure was I of your answer. He is counting on sleeping at your house to-night, and if I try to change his determination now he will see a refusal in what is only a postponement, and you will lose all the credit for your generous and noble action. There—it is agreed: to-night at ten at the Champs de Mars."

With these words the captain put his horse to a gallop and disappeared. Marouin turned his horse

and went back to his country house to give the necessary orders for the reception of a stranger whose name he did not mention.

At ten o'clock at night, as had been agreed, Marouin was on the Champs de Mars, then covered with Marshal Brune's field-artillery. No one had arrived yet. He walked up and down between the gun-carriages until a functionary came to ask what he was doing. He was hard put to it to find an answer: a man is hardly likely to be wandering about in an artillery park at ten o'clock at night for the mere pleasure of the thing. He asked to see the commanding officer. The officer came up: M. Marouin informed him that he was an avocat, attached to the law courts of Toulon, and told him that he had arranged to meet someone on the Champs de Mars, not knowing that it was prohibited, and that he was still waiting for that person. After this explanation, the officer authorised him to remain, and went back to his quarters. The sentinel, a faithful adherent to discipline, continued to pace up and down with his measured step, without troubling any more about the stranger's presence.

A few moments later a group of several persons appeared from the direction of Les Lices. The night was magnificent, and the moon brilliant. Marouin recognised Bonafoux, and went up to him. The captain at once took him by the hand and led

him to the king, and speaking in turn to each of them—

"Sire," he said, "here is the friend I told you of."

Then turning to Marouin—

"Here," he said, "is the King of Naples, exile and fugitive, whom I confide to your care. I do not speak of the possibility that some day he may get back his crown, that would deprive you of the credit of your fine action. . . . Now, be his guide —we will follow at a distance. March!"

The king and the lawyer set out at once together. Murat was dressed in a blue coat—semi-military, semi-civil, buttoned to the throat; he wore white trousers and top boots with spurs; he had long hair, moustache, and thick whiskers, which would reach round his neck.

As they rode along he questioned his host about the situation of his country house and the facility for reaching the sea in case of a surprise. Towards midnight the king and Marouin arrived at Bonette; the royal suite came up in about ten minutes; it consisted of about thirty individuals. After partaking of some light refreshment, this little troop, the last of the court of the deposed king, retired to disperse in the town and its environs, and Murat remained alone with the women, only keeping one valet named Leblanc.

Murat stayed nearly a month in this retirement, spending all his time in answering the newspapers which accused him of treason to the Emperor. This accusation was his absorbing idea, a phantom, a spectre to him; day and night he tried to shake it off, seeking in the difficult position in which he had found himself all the reasons which it might offer him for acting as he had acted. Meanwhile the terrible news of the defeat at Waterloo had spread abroad. The Emperor who had exiled him was an exile himself, and he was waiting at Rochefort, like Murat at Toulon, to hear what his enemies would decide against him. No one knows to this day what inward prompting Napoleon obeyed when, rejecting the counsels of General Lallemande and the devotion of Captain Bodin, he preferred England to America, and went like a modern Prometheus to be chained to the rock of St. Helena.

We are going to relate the fortuitous circumstance which led Murat to the moat of Pizzo, then we will leave it to fatalists to draw from this strange story whatever philosophical deduction may please them. We, as humble annalists, can only vouch for the truth of the facts we have already related and of those which will follow.

King Louis XVIII remounted his throne, consequently Murat lost all hope of remaining in France;

he felt he was bound to go. His nephew Bonafoux fitted out a frigate for the United States under the name of Prince Rocca Romana. The whole suite went on board, and they began to carry on to the boat all the valuables which the exile had been able to save from the shipwreck of his kingdom. First a bag of gold weighing nearly a hundred pounds, a sword-sheath on which were the portraits of the king, the queen, and their children, the deed of the civil estates of his family bound in velvet and adorned with his arms. Murat carried on his person a belt where some precious papers were concealed, with about a score of unmounted diamonds, which he estimated himself to be worth four millions.

When all these preparations for departing were accomplished, it was agreed that the next day, the 1st of August, at five o'clock, a boat should fetch the king to the brig from a little bay, ten minutes' walk from the house where he was staying. The king spent the night making out a route for M. Marouin by which he could reach the queen, who was then in Austria, I think.

It was finished just as it was time to leave, and on crossing the threshold of the hospitable house where he had found refuge he gave it to his host, slipped into a volume of a pocket edition of Vol-

taire. Below the story of *Micromégas* the king had written:[1]—

"Reassure yourself, dear Caroline; although unhappy, I am free. I am departing, but I do not know whither I am bound. Wherever I may be my heart will be with you and my children. "J. M."

Ten minutes later Murat and his host were waiting on the beach at Bonette for the boat which was to take them out to the ship.

They waited until midday, and nothing appeared; and yet on the horizon they could see the brig which was to be his refuge, unable to lie at anchor on account of the depth of water, sailing along the coast at the risk of giving the alarm to the sentinels.

At midday the king, worn out with fatigue and the heat of the sun, was lying on the beach, when a servant arrived, bringing various refreshments, which Madame Marouin, being very uneasy, had sent at all hazards to her husband. The king took a glass of wine and water and ate an orange, and got up for a moment to see whether the boat he was expecting was nowhere visible on the vastness of the sea. There was not a boat in sight, only the brig tossing gracefully on the horizon, impatient to be off, like a horse awaiting its master.

The king sighed and lay down again on the sand.

[1] The volume is still in the hands of M. Marouin, at Toulon.

The servant went back to Bonette with a message summoning M. Marouin's brother to the beach. He arrived in a few minutes, and almost immediately afterwards galloped off at full speed to Toulon, in order to find out from M. Bonafoux why the boat had not been sent to the king. On reaching the captain's house, he found it occupied by an armed force. They were making a search for Murat.

The messenger at last made his way through the tumult to the person he was in search of, and he heard that the boat had started at the appointed time, and that it must have gone astray in the creeks of Saint Louis and Sainte Marguerite. This was, in fact, exactly what had happened.

By five o'clock M. Marouin had reported the news to his brother and the king. It was bad news. The king had no courage left to defend his life even by flight, he was in a state of prostration which sometimes overwhelms the strongest of men, incapable of making any plan for his own safety, and leaving M. Marouin to do the best he could. Just then a fisherman was coming into harbour singing. Marouin beckoned to him, and he came up.

Marouin began by buying all the man's fish; then, when he had paid him with a few coins, he let some gold glitter before his eyes, and offered him three louis if he would take a passenger to the brig which was lying off the Croix-des-Signaux. The fisher-

man agreed to do it. This chance of escape gave back Murat all his strength; he got up, embraced Marouin, and begged him to go to the queen with the volume of Voltaire. Then he sprang into the boat, which instantly left the shore.

It was already some distance from the land when the king stopped the man who was rowing and signed to Marouin that he had forgotten something. On the beach lay a bag into which Murat had put a magnificent pair of pistols mounted with silver gilt which the queen had given him, and which he set great store on. As soon as he was within hearing he shouted his reason for returning to his host. Marouin seized the valise, and without waiting for Murat to land he threw it into the boat; the bag flew open, and one of the pistols fell out. The fisherman only glanced once at the royal weapon, but it was enough to make him notice its richness and to arouse his suspicions. Nevertheless, he went on rowing towards the frigate. M. Marouin seeing him disappear in the distance, left his brother on the beach, and bowing once more to the king, returned to the house to calm his wife's anxieties and to take the repose of which he was in much need.

Two hours later he was awakened. His house was to be searched in its turn by soldiers. They searched every nook and corner without finding a trace of the king. Just as they were getting desper-

ate, the brother came in; Marouin smiled at him, believing the king to be safe, but by the new-comer's expression he saw that some fresh misfortune was in the wind. In the first moment's respite given him by his visitors he went up to his brother.

"Well," he said, "I hope the king is on board?"

"The king is fifty yards away, hidden in the outhouse."

"Why did he come back?"

"The fisherman pretended he was afraid of a sudden squall, and refused to take him off to the brig."

"The scoundrel!"

The soldiers came in again.

They spent the night in fruitless searching about the house and buildings; several times they passed within a few steps of the king, and he could hear their threats and imprecations. At last, half an hour before dawn, they went away. Marouin watched them go, and when they were out of sight he ran to the king. He found him lying in a corner, a pistol clutched in each hand. The unhappy man had been overcome by fatigue and had fallen asleep. Marouin hesitated a moment to bring him back to his wandering, tormented life, but there was not a minute to lose. He woke him.

They went down to the beach at once. A morning mist lay over the sea. They could not see any-

thing two hundred yards ahead. They were obliged to wait. At last the first sunbeams began to pierce this nocturnal mist. It slowly dispersed, gliding over the sea as clouds move in the sky. The king's hungry eye roved over the tossing waters before him, but he saw nothing, yet he could not banish the hope that somewhere behind that moving curtain he would find his refuge. Little by little the horizon came into view; light wreaths of mist, like smoke, still floated about the surface of the water, and in each of them the king thought he recognised the white sails of his vessel. The last gradually vanished, the sea was revealed in all its immensity, it was deserted. Not daring to delay any longer, the ship had sailed away in the night.

"So," said the king, "the die is cast. I will go to Corsica."

The same day Marshal Brune was assassinated at Avignon.

II

CORSICA

ONCE more on the same beach at Bonette, in the same bay where he had awaited the boat in vain, still attended by his band of faithful followers, we find Murat on the 22nd August in the same year. It was no longer by Napoleon that he was threatened, it was by Louis XVIII that he was proscribed; it was no longer the military loyalty of Marshal Brune who came with tears in his eyes to give notice of the orders he had received, but the ungrateful hatred of M. de Rivière, who had set a price[1] on the head of the man who had saved his own.[2] M. de Rivière had indeed written to the ex-King of Naples advising him to abandon himself to the good faith and humanity of the King of France, but his vague invitation had not seemed sufficient guarantee to the outlaw, especially on the part of one who had allowed the assassination almost before his eyes of a man who carried a safe-conduct signed by himself. Murat knew of the massacre of the

[1] 48,000 francs. [2] Conspiracy of Pichegru.

Mamelukes at Marseilles, the assassination of Brune at Avignon; he had been warned the day before by the police of Toulon that a formal order for his arrest was out; thus it was impossible that he should remain any longer in France. Corsica, with its hospitable towns, its friendly mountains, its impenetrable forests, was hardly fifty leagues distant; he must reach Corsica, and wait in its towns, mountains, and forests until the crowned heads of Europe should decide the fate of the man they had called brother for seven years.

At ten o'clock at night the king went down to the shore. The boat which was to take him across had not reached the rendezvous, but this time there was not the slightest fear that it would fail; the bay had been reconnoitred during the day by three men devoted to the fallen fortunes of the king—Messieurs Blancard, Langlade, and Donadieu, all three naval officers, men of ability and warm heart, who had sworn by their own lives to convey Murat to Corsica, and who were in fact risking their lives in order to accomplish their promise. Murat saw the deserted shore without uneasiness, indeed this delay afforded him a few more moments of patriotic satisfaction.

On this little patch of land, this strip of sand, the unhappy exile clung to his mother France, for once his foot touched the vessel which was to carry him

away, his separation from France would be long, if not eternal. He started suddenly amidst these thoughts and sighed: he had just perceived a sail gliding over the waves like a phantom through the transparent darkness of the southern night. Then a sailor's song was heard; Murat recognised the appointed signal, and answered it by burning the priming of a pistol, and the boat immediately ran inshore; but as she drew three feet of water, she was obliged to stop ten or twelve feet from the beach; two men dashed into the water and reached the beach, while a third remained crouching in the stern-sheets wrapped in his boat-cloak.

"Well, my good friends," said the king, going towards Blancard and Langlade until he felt the waves wet his feet "the moment is come, is it not? The wind is favourable, the sea calm, we must get to sea."

"Yes, answered Langlade, "yes, we must start; and yet perhaps it would be wiser to wait till to-morrow."

"Why?" asked Murat.

Langlade did not answer, but turning towards the west, he raised his hand, and according to the habit of sailors, he whistled to call the wind.

"That's no good," said Donadieu, who had remained in the boat. "Here are the first gusts; you will have more than you know what to do with

in a minute. . . . Take care, Langlade, take care! Sometimes in calling the wind you wake up a storm."

Murat started, for he thought that this warning which rose from the sea had been given him by the spirit of the waters; but the impression was a passing one, and he recovered himself in a moment.

"All the better," he said; "the more wind we have, the faster we shall go."

"Yes," answered Langlade, "but God knows where it will take us if it goes on shifting like this."

"Don't start to-night, sire," said Blancard, adding his voice to those of his two companions.

"But why not?"

"You see that bank of black cloud there, don't you? Well, at sunset it was hardly visible, now it covers a good part of the sky, in an hour there won't be a star to be seen."

"Are you afraid?" asked Murat.

"Afraid!" answered Langlade. "Of what? Of the storm? I might as well ask if your Majesty is afraid of a cannon-ball. We have demurred solely on your account, sire; do you think sea-dogs like ourselves would delay on account of the storm?"

"Then let us go!" cried Murat, with a sigh.

"Good-bye, Marouin. . . . God alone can reward you for what you have done for me. I am at your orders, gentlemen."

At these words the two sailors seized the king and hoisted him on to their shoulders, and carried him into the sea; in another moment he was on board. Langlade and Blancard sprang in behind him. Donadieu remained at the helm, the two other officers undertook the management of the boat, and began their work by unfurling the sails. Immediately the pinnace seemed to rouse herself like a horse at touch of the spur; the sailors cast a careless glance back, and Murat feeling that they were sailing away, turned towards his host and called for a last time—

"You have your route as far as Trieste. Do not forget my wife! . . . Good-bye—good-bye——!"

"God keep you, sire!" murmured Marouin.

And for some time, thanks to the white sail which gleamed through the darkness, he could follow with his eyes the boat which was rapidly disappearing; at last it vanished altogether. Marouin lingered on the shore, though he could see nothing; then he heard a cry, made faint by the distance; it was Murat's last adieu to France.

When M. Marouin was telling me these details one evening on the very spot where it all happened, though twenty years had passed, he remembered clearly the slightest incidents of the embarkation that night. From that moment he assured me that a presentiment of misfortune seized him; he could

not tear himself away from the shore, and several times he longed to call the king back, but, like a man in a dream, he opened his mouth without being able to utter a sound. He was afraid of being thought foolish, and it was not until one o'clock—that is, two and a half hours after the departure of the boat—that he went home with a sad and heavy heart.

The adventurous navigators had taken the course from Toulon to Bastia, and at first it seemed to the king that the sailors' predictions were belied; the wind, instead of getting up, fell little by little, and two hours after the departure the boat was rocking without moving forward or backward on the waves, which were sinking from moment to moment. Murat sadly watched the phosphorescent furrow trailing behind the little boat: he had nerved himself to face a storm, but not a dead calm, and without even interrogating his companions, of whose uneasiness he took no account, he lay down in the boat, wrapped in his cloak, closing his eyes as if he were asleep, and following the flow of his thoughts, which were far more tumultuous than that of the waters. Soon the two sailors, thinking him asleep, joined the pilot, and sitting down beside the helm, they began to consult together.

"You were wrong, Langlade," said Donadieu, "in choosing a craft like this, which is either too

small or else too big; in an open boat we can never weather a storm, and without oars we can never make any way in a calm."

"'Fore God! I had no choice. I was obliged to take what I could get, and if it had not been the season for tunny-fishing I might not even have got this wretched pinnace, or rather I should have had to go into the harbour to find it, and they keep such a sharp lookout that I might well have gone in without coming out again."

"At least it is seaworthy," said Blancard.

"*Pardieu,* you know what nails and planks are when they have been soaked in sea-water for ten years. On any ordinary occasion, a man would rather not go in her from Marseilles to the Château d'If, but on an occasion like this one would willingly go round the world in a nutshell."

"Hush!" said Donadieu. The sailors listened; a distant growl was heard, but it was so faint that only the experienced ear of a sailor could have distinguished it.

"Yes, yes," said Langlade," "it is a warning for those who have legs or wings to regain the homes and nests that they ought never to have left."

"Are we far from the islands?" asked Donadieu quickly.

"About a mile off."

"Steer for them."

"What for?" asked Murat, looking up.

"To put in there, sire, if we can."

"No, no," cried Murat; "I will not land except in Corsica. I will not leave France again. Besides, the sea is calm and the wind is getting up again——"

"Down with the sails!" shouted Donadieu. Instantly Langlade and Blancard jumped forward to carry out the order. The sail slid down the mast and fell in a heap in the bottom of the boat.

"What are you doing?" cried Murat. "Do you forget that I am king and that I command you?"

"Sire," said Donadieu, "there is a king more powerful than you—God; there is a voice which drowns yours—the voice of the tempest: let us save your Majesty if possible, and demand nothing more of us."

Just then a flash of lightning quivered along the horizon, a clap of thunder nearer than the first one was heard, a light foam appeared on the surface of the water, and the boat trembled like a living thing. Murat began to understand that danger was approaching, then he got up smiling, threw his hat behind him, shook back his long hair, and breathed in the storm like the smell of powder—the soldier was ready for the battle.

"Sire," said Donadieu, "you have seen many a battle, but perhaps you have never watched a storm:

if you are curious about it, cling to the mast, for you have a fine opportunity now."

"What ought I to do?" said Murat. "Can I not help you in any way?"

"No, not just now, sire; later you will be useful at the pumps."

During this dialogue the storm had drawn near; it rushed on the travellers like a war-horse, breathing out fire and wind through its nostrils, neighing like thunder, and scattering the foam of the waves beneath its feet.

Donadieu turned the rudder, the boat yielded as if it understood the necessity for prompt obedience, and presented the poop to the shock of wind; then the squall passed, leaving the sea quivering, and everything was calm again. The storm took breath.

"Will that gust be all?" asked Murat.

"No, your Majesty, that was the advance-guard only; the body of the army will be up directly."

"And are you not going to prepare for it?" asked the king gaily.

"What could we do?" said Donadieu. "We have not an inch of canvas to catch the wind, and as long as we do not make too much water, we shall float like a cork. Look out—sire!"

Indeed, a second hurricane was on its way, bringing rain and lightning; it was swifter than the first. Donadieu endeavoured to repeat the same manœu-

vre, but he could not turn before the wind struck the boat, the mast bent like a reed; the boat shipped a wave.

"To the pumps!" cried Donadieu. "Sire, now is the moment to help us——"

Blancard, Langlade, and Murat seized their hats and began to bale out the boat. The position of the four men was terrible—it lasted three hours.

At dawn the wind fell, but the sea was still high. They began to feel the need of food: all the provisions had been spoiled by sea-water, only the wine had been preserved from its contact.

The king took a bottle and swallowed a little wine first, then he passed it to his companions, who drank in their turn: necessity had overcome etiquette. By chance Langlade had on him a few chocolates, which he offered to the king. Murat divided them into four equal parts, and forced his companions to take their shares; then, when the meal was over, they steered for Corsica, but the boat had suffered so much that it was improbable that it would reach Bastia.

The whole day passed without making ten miles; the boat was kept under the jib, as they dared not hoist the mainsail, and the wind was so variable that much time was lost in humouring its caprices.

By evening the boat had drawn a considerable amount of water, it penetrated between the boards,

the handkerchiefs of the crew served to plug up the leaks, and night, which was descending in mournful gloom, wrapped them a second time in darkness. Prostrated with fatigue, Murat fell asleep, Blancard and Langlade took their places beside Donadieu, and the three men, who seemed insensible to the calls of sleep and fatigue, watched over his slumbers.

The night was calm enough apparently, but low grumblings were heard now and then.

The three sailors looked at each other strangely and then at the king, who was sleeping at the bottom of the boat, his cloak soaked with sea-water, sleeping as soundly as he had slept on the sands of Egypt or the snows of Russia.

Then one of them got up and went to the other end of the boat, whistling between his teeth a Provençal air; then, after examining the sky, the waves, and the boat, he went back to his comrades and sat down, muttering, "Impossible! Except by a miracle, we shall never make the land."

The night passed through all its phases. At dawn there was a vessel in sight.

"A sail!" cried Donadieu,—"a sail!"

At this cry the king awoke; and soon a little trading brig hove in sight, going from Corsica to Toulon.

Donadieu steered for the brig, Blancard hoisted enough sail to work the boat, and Langlade ran to

the prow and held up the king's cloak on the end of a sort of harpoon. Soon the voyagers perceived that they had been sighted, the brig went about to approach them, and in ten minutes they found themselves within fifty yards of it. The captain appeared in the bows. Then the king hailed him and offered him a substantial reward if he would receive them on board and take them to Corsica. The captain listened to the proposal; then immediately turning to the crew, he gave an order in an undertone which Donadieu could not hear, but which he understood probably by the gesture, for he instantly gave Langlade and Blancard the order to make away from the schooner. They obeyed with the unquestioning promptitude of sailors; but the king stamped his foot.

"What are you doing, Donadieu? What are you about? Don't you see that she is coming up to us?"

"Yes—upon my soul—so she is. . . . Do as I say, Langlade; ready, Blancard. Yes, she is coming upon us, and perhaps I was too late in seeing this. That's all right—that's all right: my part now."

Then he forced over the rudder, giving it so violent a jerk that the boat, forced to change her course suddenly, seemed to rear and plunge like a horse struggling against the curb; finally she obeyed. A huge wave, raised by the giant bearing down on

the pinnace, carried it on like a leaf, and the brig passed within a few feet of the stern.

"Ah! . . . traitor!" cried the king, who had only just begun to realise the intention of the captain. At the same time, he pulled a pistol from his belt, crying "Board her! board her!" and tried to fire on the brig, but the powder was wet and would not catch. The king was furious, and went on shouting "Board her! board her!"

"Yes, the wretch, or rather the imbecile," said Donadieu, "he took us for pirates, and wanted to sink us—as if we needed him to do that!"

Indeed, a single glance at the boat showed that she was beginning to make water.

The effort to escape which Donadieu had made had strained the boat terribly, and the water was pouring in by a number of leaks between the planks; they had to begin again bailing out with their hats, and went on at it for ten hours. Then for the second time Donadieu heard the consoling cry, "A sail! a sail!" The king and his companions immediately left off bailing; they hoisted the sails again, and steered for the vessel which was coming towards them, and neglected to fight against the water, which was rising rapidly.

From that time forth it was a question of time, of minutes, of seconds; it was a question of reaching the ship before the boat foundered.

The vessel, however, seemed to understand the desperate position of the men imploring help; she was coming up at full speed. Langlade was the first to recognise her; she was a Government felucca plying between Toulon and Bastia. Langlade was a friend of the captain, and he called his name with the penetrating voice of desperation, and he was heard. It was high time: the water kept on rising, and the king and his companions were already up to their knees; the boat groaned in its death-struggle; it stood still, and began to go round and round.

Just then two or three ropes thrown from the felucca fell upon the boat; the king seized one, sprang forward, and reached the rope-ladder: he was saved.

Blancard and Langlade immediately followed. Donadieu waited until the last, as was his duty, and as he put his foot on the ladder he felt the other boat begin to go under; he turned round with all a sailor's calm, and saw the gulf open its jaws beneath him, and then the shattered boat capsized, and immediately disappeared. Five seconds more, and the four men who were saved would have been lost beyond recall![1]

[1] These details are well known to the people of Toulon, and I have heard them myself a score of times during the two stays that I made in that town during 1834 and 1835. Some of the people who related them had them first-hand from Langlade and Donadieu themselves.

Murat had hardly gained the deck before a man came and fell at his feet: it was a Mameluke whom he had taken to Egypt in former years, and had since married at Castellamare; business affairs had taken him to Marseilles, where by a miracle he had escaped the massacre of his comrades, and in spite of his disguise and fatigue he had recognised his former master.

His exclamations of joy prevented the king from keeping up his incognito. Then Senator Casabianca, Captain Oletta, a nephew of Prince Baciocchi, a staff-paymaster called Boërco, who were themselves fleeing from the massacres of the South, were all on board the vessel, and improvising a little court, they greeted the king with the title of "your Majesty." It had been a sudden embarkation, it brought about a swift change: he was no longer Murat the exile; he was Joachim I, the King of Naples. The exile's refuge disappeared with the foundered boat; in its place Naples and its magnificent gulf appeared on the horizon like a marvellous mirage, and no doubt the primary idea of the fatal expedition of Calabria was originated in the first days of exultation which followed those hours of anguish. The king, however, still uncertain of the welcome which awaited him in Corsica, took the name of the Count of Campo Melle, and it was under this name that he landed at Bastia on the

25th August. But this precaution was useless; three days after his arrival, not a soul but knew of his presence in the town.

Crowds gathered at once, and cries of "Long live Joachim!" were heard, and the king, fearing to disturb the public peace, left Bastia the same evening with his three companions and his Mameluke. Two hours later he arrived at Viscovato, and knocked at the door of General Franceschetti, who had been in his service during his whole reign, and who, leaving Naples at the same time as the king, had gone to Corsica with his wife, to live with his father-in-law, M. Colonna Cicaldi.

He was in the middle of supper when a servant told him that a stranger was asking to speak to him: he went out, and found Murat wrapped in a military greatcoat, a sailor's cap drawn down on his head, his beard grown long, and wearing a soldier's trousers, boots, and gaiters.

The general stood still in amazement; Murat fixed his great dark eyes on him, and then, folding his arms—

"Franceschetti," said he, "have you room at your table for your general, who is hungry? Have you a shelter under your roof for your king, who is an exile?"

Franceschetti looked astonished as he recognised Joachim, and could only answer him by falling on

his knees and kissing his hand. From that moment the general's house was at Murat's disposal.

The news of the king's arrival had hardly been handed about the neighbourhood before officers of all ranks hastened to Viscovato, veterans who had fought under him, Corsican hunters who were attracted by his adventurous character; in a few days the general's house was turned into a palace, the village into a royal capital, the island into a kingdom.

Strange rumours were heard concerning Murat's intentions. An army of nine hundred men helped to give them some amount of confirmation. It was then that Blancard, Donadieu, and Langlade took leave of him; Murat wished to keep them, but they had been vowed to the rescue of the exile, not to the fortunes of the king.

We have related how Murat had met one of his former Mamelukes, a man called Othello, on board the Bastia mailboat. Othello had followed him to Viscovato, and the ex-King of Naples considered how to make use of him. Family relations recalled him naturally to Castellamare, and Murat ordered him to return there, entrusting to him letters for persons on whose devotion he could depend. Othello started, and reached his father-in-law's safely, and thought he could confide in him; but the latter was horror-struck, and alarmed the police,

who made a descent on Othello one night, and seized the letters.

The next day each man to whom a letter was addressed was arrested and ordered to answer Murat as if all was well, and to point out Salerno as the best place for disembarking: five out of seven were dastards enough to obey; the two remaining, who were two Spanish brothers, absolutely refused; they were thrown into a dungeon.

However, on the 17th September, Murat left Viscovato; General Franceschetti and several Corsican officers served as escort; he took the road to Ajaccio by Cotone, the mountains of Serra and Bosco, Venaco and Vivaro, by the gorges of the forest of Vezzanovo and Bogognone; he was received and fêted like a king everywhere, and at the gates of the towns he was met by deputations who made him speeches and saluted him with the title of "Majesty"; at last, on the 23rd September, he arrived at Ajaccio. The whole population awaited him outside the walls, and his entry into the town was a triumphal procession; he was taken to the inn which had been fixed upon beforehand by the quartermasters. It was enough to turn the head of a man less impressionable than Murat; as for him, he was intoxicated with it. As he went into the inn he held out his hand to Franceschetti.

"You see," he said, "what the Neapolitans will do for me by the way the Corsicans receive me."

It was the first mention which had escaped him of his plans for the future, and from that very day he began to give orders for his departure.

They collected ten little feluccas: a Maltese, named Barbara, former captain of a frigate of the Neapolitan navy, was appointed commander-in-chief of the expedition; two hundred and fifty men were recruited and ordered to hold themselves in readiness for the first signal.

Murat was only waiting for the answers to Othello's letters: they arrived on the afternoon of the 28th. Murat invited all his officers to a grand dinner, and ordered double pay and double rations to the men.

The king was at dessert when the arrival of M. Maceroni was announced to him: he was the envoy of the foreign powers who brought Murat the answer which he had been awaiting so long at Toulon. Murat left the table and went into another room. M. Maceroni introduced himself as charged with an official mission, and handed the king the Emperor of Austria's ultimatum. It was couched in the following terms:—

"Monsieur Maceroni is authorised by these presents to announce to King Joachim that His

Majesty the Emperor of Austria will afford him shelter in his States on the following terms:

"1. The king is to take a private name. The queen having adopted that of Lipano, it is proposed that the king should do likewise.

"2. It will be permitted to the king to choose a town in Bohemia, Moravia, or the Tyrol, as a place of residence. He could even inhabit a country house in one of these same provinces without inconvenience.

"3. The king is to give his word of honour to His Imperial and Royal Majesty that he will never leave the States of Austria without the express permission of the Emperor, and that he is to live like a private gentleman of distinction, but submitting to the laws in force in the States of Austria.

"In attestation whereof, and to guard against abuse, the undersigned has received the order of the Emperor to sign the present declaration.

"(*Signed*) PRINCE OF METTERNICH

"PARIS, *1st Sept.* 1815"

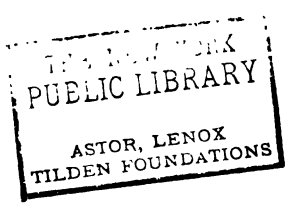
Murat smiled as he finished reading, then he signed to M. Maceroni to follow him.

He led him on to the terrace of the house, which looked over the whole town, and over which a banner floated as it might on a royal castle. From thence they could see Ajaccio, all gay and illumi-

Before he had time to pick himself up, the populace had fallen on him.

—p. 2448

From the painting by A. Wald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nated, the port with its little fleet, and the streets crowded with people, as if it were a fête-day.

Hardly had the crowd set eyes on Murat before a universal cry arose, "Long live Joachim, brother of Napoleon! Long live the King of Naples!" Murat bowed, and the shouts were redoubled, and the garrison band played the national airs.

M. Maceroni did not know how to believe his own eyes and ears.

When the king had enjoyed his astonishment, he invited him to go down to the drawing-room. His staff were there, all in full uniform: one might have been at Caserte or at Capo di Monte. At last, after a moment's hesitation, Maceroni approached Murat.

"Sir," he said, "what is my answer to be to His Majesty the Emperor of Austria?"

"Sir," answered Murat, with the lofty dignity which sat so well on his fine face, "tell my brother Francis what you have seen and heard, and add that I am setting out this very night to reconquer my kingdom of Naples."

III

PIZZO

THE letters which had made Murat resolve to leave Corsica had been brought to him by a Calabrian named Luidgi. He had presented himself to the king as the envoy of the Arab, Othello, who had been thrown into prison in Naples, as we have related, as well as the seven recipients of the letters.

The answers, written by the head of the Neapolitan police, indicated the port of Salerno as the best place for Joachim to land; for King Ferdinand had assembled three thousand Austrian troops at that point, not daring to trust the Neapolitan soldiers, who cherished a brilliant and enthusiastic memory of Murat.

Accordingly the flotilla was directed for the Gulf of Salerno, but within sight of the island of Capri a violent storm broke over it, and drove it as far as Paola, a little seaport situated ten miles from Cosenza. Consequently the vessels were anchored for the night of the 5th of October in a little indentation of the coast not worthy of the name of a roadstead. The king, to remove all suspicion from

the coastguards and the Sicilian *scorridori*,[1] ordered that all lights should be extinguished and that the vessels should tack about during the night; but towards one o'clock such a violent land-wind sprang up that the expedition was driven out to sea, so that on the 6th at dawn the king's vessel was alone.

During the morning they overhauled Captain Cicconi's felucca, and the two ships dropped anchor at four o'clock in sight of Santo-Lucido. In the evening the king commanded Ottoviani, a staff officer, to go ashore and reconnoitre. Luidgi offered to accompany him. Murat accepted his services. So Ottoviani and his guide went ashore, whilst Cicconi and his felucca put out to sea in search of the rest of the fleet.

Towards eleven o'clock at night the lieutenant of the watch descried a man in the waves swimming to the vessel. As soon as he was within hearing the lieutenant hailed him. The swimmer immediately made himself known: it was Luidgi. They put out the boat, and he came on board. Then he told them that Ottoviani had been arrested, and he had only escaped himself by jumping into the sea. Murat's first idea was to go to the rescue of Ottoviani; but Luidgi made the king realise the danger and uselessness of such an attempt; nevertheless,

[1] Small vessels fitted up as ships-of-war.

Joachim remained agitated and irresolute until two o'clock in the morning.

At last he gave the order to put to sea again. During the manœuvre which effected this a sailor fell overboard and disappeared before they had time to help him. Decidedly these were ill omens.

On the morning of the 7th two vessels were in sight. The king gave the order to prepare for action, but Barbara recognised them as Cicconi's felucca and Courrand's lugger, which had joined each other and were keeping each other company. They hoisted the necessary signals, and the two captains brought up their vessels alongside the admiral's.

While they were deliberating as to what route to follow, a boat came up to Murat's vessel. Captain Pernice was on board with a lieutenant. They came to ask the king's permission to board his ship, not wishing to remain on Courrand's, for in their opinion he was a traitor.

Murat sent to fetch him, and in spite of his protestations he was made to descend into a boat with fifty men, and the boat was moored to the vessel. The order was carried out at once, and the little squadron advanced, coasting along the shores of Calabria without losing sight of them; but at ten o'clock in the evening, just as they came abreast of the Gulf of Santa-Eufemia, Captain Courrand cut

the rope which moored his boat to the vessel, and rowed away from the fleet.

Murat had thrown himself on to his bed without undressing; they brought him the news.

He rushed up to the deck, and arrived in time to see the boat, which was fleeing in the direction of Corsica, grow small and vanish in the distance. He remained motionless, not uttering a cry, giving no signs of rage; he only sighed and let his head fall on his breast: it was one more leaf falling from the exhausted tree of his hopes.

General Franceschetti profited by this hour of discouragement to advise him not to land in Calabria, and to go direct to Trieste, in order to claim from Austria the refuge which had been offered.

The king was going through one of those periods of extreme exhaustion, of mortal depression, when courage quite gives way: he refused flatly at first, and then at last agreed to do it.

Just then the general perceived a sailor lying on some coils of ropes, within hearing of all they said; he interrupted himself, and pointed him out to Murat.

The latter got up, went to see the man, and recognised Luidgi; overcome with exhaustion, he had fallen asleep on deck. The king satisfied himself that the sleep was genuine, and besides he had full confidence in the man. The conversation, which

had been interrupted for a moment, was renewed: it was agreed that without saying anything about the new plans, they would clear Cape Spartivento and enter the Adriatic; then the king and the general went below again to the lower deck.

The next day, the 8th October, they found themselves abreast of Pizzo, when Joachim, questioned by Barbara as to what he proposed to do, gave the order to steer for Messina. Barbara answered that he was ready to obey, but that they were in need of food and water; consequently he offered to go on board Cicconi's vessel and to land with him to get stores. The king agreed; Barbara asked for the passports which he had received from the allied powers, in order, he said, not to be molested by the local authorities.

These documents were too important for Murat to consent to part with them; perhaps the king was beginning to suspect: he refused. Barbara insisted: Murat ordered him to land without the papers; Barbara flatly refused.

The king, accustomed to being obeyed, raised his riding-whip to strike the Maltese, but, changing his resolution, he ordered the soldiers to prepare their arms, the officers to put on full uniform; he himself set the example. The disembarkation was decided upon, and Pizzo was to become the Golfe Juan of the new Napoleon.

Consequently the vessels were steered for land. The king got down into a boat with twenty-eight soldiers and three servants, amongst whom was Luidgi. As they drew near the shore General Franceschetti made a movement as if to land, but Murat stopped him.

"It is for me to land first," he said, and he sprang on shore.

He was dressed in a general's coat, white breeches and riding-boots, a belt carrying two pistols, a gold-embroidered hat with a cockade fastened in with a clasp made of fourteen brilliants, and lastly he carried under his arm the banner round which he hoped to rally his partisans. The town clock of Pizzo struck ten. Murat went straight up to the town, from which he was hardly a hundred yards distant. He followed the wide stone staircase which led up to it.

It was Sunday. Mass was about to be celebrated, and the whole population had assembled in the Great Square when he arrived. No one recognised him, and everyone gazed with astonishment at the fine officer. Presently he saw amongst the peasants a former sergeant of his who had served in his guard at Naples. He walked straight up to him and put his hand on the man's shoulder.

"Tavella," he said, "don't you recognise me?" But as the man made no answer—

"I am Joachim Murat, I am your king," he said. "Yours be the honour to shout 'Long live Joachim!' first."

Murat's suite instantly made the air ring with acclamations, but the Calabrians remained silent, and not one of his comrades took up the cry for which the king himself had given the signal; on the contrary, a low murmur ran through the crowd. Murat well understood this forerunner of the storm.

"Well," he said to Tavella, "if you won't cry 'Long live Joachim!' you can at least fetch me a horse, and from sergeant I will promote you to be captain."

Tavella walked away without answering, but instead of carrying out the king's behest, went into his house, and did not appear again.

In the meantime the people were massing together without evincing any of the sympathy that the king had hoped for. He felt that he was lost if he did not act instantly.

"To Monteleone!" he cried, springing forward towards the road which led to that town.

"To Monteleone!" shouted his officers and men, as they followed him.

And the crowd, persistently silent, opened to let them pass.

But they had hardly left the square before a great disturbance broke out. A man named Giorgio Pel-

legrino came out of his house with a gun and crossed the square, shouting, "To your arms!"

He knew that Captain Trenta Capelli commanding the Cosenza garrison was just then in Pizzo, and he was going to warn him.

The cry "To arms!" had more effect on the crowd than the cry "Long live Joachim!"

Every Calabrian possesses a gun, and each one ran to fetch his, and when Trenta Capelli and Giorgio Pellegrino came back to the square they found nearly two hundred armed men there.

They placed themselves at the head of the column, and hastened forward in pursuit of the king; they came up with him about ten minutes from the square, where the bridge is nowadays. Seeing them, Murat stopped and waited for them.

Trenta Capelli advanced, sword in hand, towards the king.

"Sire," said the latter, "will you exchange your captain's epaulettes for a general's? Cry 'Long live Joachim!' and follow me with these brave fellows to Monteleone."

"Sire," said Trenta Capelli, "we are the faithful subjects of King Ferdinand, and we come to fight you, and not to bear you company. Give yourself up, if you would prevent bloodshed."

Murat looked at the captain with an expression which it would be impossible to describe; then with-

out deigning to answer, he signed to Capelli to move away, while his other hand went to his pistol. Giorgio Pellegrino perceived the movement.

"Down, captain, down!" he cried. The captain obeyed. Immediately a bullet whistled over his head and brushed Murat's head.

"Fire!" commanded Franceschetti.

"Down with your arms!" cried Murat.

Waving his handkerchief in his right hand, he made a step towards the peasants, but at the same moment a number of shots were fired, an officer and two or three men fell. In a case like this, when blood has begun to flow, there is no stopping it.

Murat knew this fatal truth, and his course of action was rapidly decided on. Before him he had five hundred armed men, and behind him a precipice thirty feet high: he sprang from the jagged rock on which he was standing, and alighting on the sand, jumped up safe and sound. General Franceschetti and his aide-de-camp Campana were able to accomplish the jump in the same way, and all three went rapidly down to the sea through the little wood which lay within a hundred yards of the shore, and which hid them for a few moments from their enemies.

As they came out of the wood a fresh discharge greeted them, bullets whistled round them, but no

one was hit, and the three fugitives went on down to the beach.

It was only then that the king perceived that the boat which had brought them to land had gone off again. The three ships which composed the fleet, far from remaining to guard his landing, were sailing away at full speed into the open sea.

The Maltese, Barbara, was going off not only with Murat's fortune, but with his hopes likewise, his salvation, his very life. They could not believe in such treachery, and the king took it for some manœuvre of seamanship, and seeing a fishing-boat drawn up on the beach on some nets, he called to his two companions, "Launch that boat!"

They all began to push it down to the sea with the energy of despair, the strength of agony.

No one had dared to leap from the rock in pursuit of them; their enemies, forced to make a détour, left them a few moments of liberty.

But soon shouts were heard: Giorgio Pellegrino, Trenta Capelli, followed by the whole population of Pizzo, rushed out about a hundred and fifty paces from where Murat, Franceschetti, and Campana were straining themselves to make the boat glide down the sand.

These cries were immediately followed by a volley. Campana fell, with a bullet through his heart.

The boat, however, was launched. Franceschetti

sprang into it, Murat was about to follow, but he had not observed that the spurs of his riding-boots had caught in the meshes of the net. The boat, yielding to the push he gave it, glided away, and the king fell head foremost, with his feet on land and his face in the water. Before he had time to pick himself up, the populace had fallen on him: in one instant they had torn away his epaulettes, his banner, and his coat, and would have torn him to bits himself, had not Giorgio Pellegrino and Trenta Capelli taken him under their protection, and giving him an arm on each side, defended him in their turn against the people. Thus he crossed the square as a prisoner where an hour before he had walked as a king.

His captors took him to the castle: he was pushed into the common prison, the door was shut upon him, and the king found himself among thieves and murderers, who, not knowing him, took him for a companion in crime, and greeted him with foul language and hoots of derision.

A quarter of an hour later the door of the gaol opened and Commander Mattei came in: he found Murat standing with head proudly erect and folded arms. There was an expression of indefinable loftiness in this half-naked man whose face was stained with blood and bespattered with mud. Mattei bowed before him.

"Commander," said Murat, recognising his rank by his epaulettes, "look round you and tell me whether this is a prison for a king."

Then a strange thing happened: the criminals, who, believing Murat their accomplice, had welcomed him with vociferations and laughter, now bent before his royal majesty, which had not overawed Pellegrino and Trenta Capelli, and retired silently to the depths of their dungeon.

Misfortune had invested Murat with a new power.

Commander Mattei murmured some excuse, and invited Murat to follow him to a room that he had had prepared for him; but before going out, Murat put his hand in his pocket and pulled out a handful of gold and let it fall in a shower in the midst of the gaol.

"See," he said, turning towards the prisoners, "it shall not be said that you have received a visit from a king, prisoner and crownless as he is, without having received largesse."

"Long live Joachim!" cried the prisoners.

Murat smiled bitterly. Those same words repeated by the same number of voices an hour before in the public square, instead of resounding in the prison, would have made him King of Naples.

The most important events proceed sometimes

from such mere trifles, that it seems as if God and the devil must throw dice for the life or death of men, for the rise or fall of empires.

Murat followed Commander Mattei: he led him to a little room which the porter had put at his disposal. Mattei was going to retire when Murat called him back.

"Commander," he said, "I want a scented bath."

"Sire, it will be difficult to obtain."

"Here are fifty ducats; let someone buy all the eau de Cologne that can be obtained. Ah—and let some tailors be sent to me."

"It will be impossible to find anyone here capable of making anything but a peasant's clothes."

"Send someone to Monteleone to fetch them from there."

The commander bowed and went out.

Murat was in his bath when the Cavaliere Alcala was announced, a General and Governor of the town. He had sent damask coverlets, curtains, and arm-chairs. Murat was touched by this attention, and it gave him fresh composure. At two o'clock the same day General Nunziante arrived from Santa-Tropea with three thousand men. Murat greeted his old acquaintance with pleasure; but at the first word the king perceived that he was before his judge, and that he had not come for the

purpose of making a visit, but to make an official inquiry.

Murat contented himself with stating that he had been on his way from Corsica to Trieste with a passport from the Emperor of Austria when stormy weather and lack of provisions had forced him to put into Pizzo. All other questions Murat met with a stubborn silence; then at least, wearied by his importunity—

"General," he said, "can you lend me some clothes after my bath?"

The general understood that he could expect no more information, and, bowing to the king, he went out. Ten minutes later, a complete uniform was brought to Murat; he put it on immediately, asked for a pen and ink, wrote to the commander-in-chief of the Austrian troops at Naples, to the English ambassador, and to his wife, to tell them of his detention at Pizzo. These letters written, he got up and paced his room for some time in evident agitation; at last, needing fresh air, he opened the window. There was a view of the very beach where he had been captured.

Two men were digging a hole in the sand at the foot of the little redoubt. Murat watched them mechanically. When the two men had finished, they went into a neighbouring house and soon came out, bearing a corpse in their arms.

The king searched his memory, and indeed it seemed to him that in the midst of that terrible scene he had seen someone fall, but who it was he no longer remembered. The corpse was quite without covering, but by the long black hair and youthful outlines the king recognised Campana, the aide-de-camp he had always loved best.

This scene, watched from a prison window in the twilight, this solitary burial on the shore, in the sand, moved Murat more deeply than his own fate. Great tears filled his eyes and fell silently down the leonine face. At that moment General Nunziante came in and surprised him with outstretched arms and face bathed with tears. Murat heard him enter and turned round, and seeing the old soldier's surprise—

"Yes, general," he said, "I weep; I weep for that boy, just twenty-four, entrusted to me by his parents, whose death I have brought about. I weep for that vast, brilliant future which is buried in an unknown grave, in an enemy's country, on a hostile shore. Oh, Campana! Campana! if ever I am king again, I will raise you a royal tomb."

The general had had dinner served in an adjacent room. Murat followed him and sat down to table, but he could not eat. The sight which he had just witnessed had made him heart-broken, and yet without a line on his brow that man had been through

the battles of Aboukir, Eylau, and Moscow! After dinner, Murat went into his room again, gave his various letters to General Nunziante, and begged to be left alone. The general went away.

Murat paced round his room several times, walking with long steps, and pausing from time to time before the window, but without opening it.

At last he overcame a deep reluctance, put his hand on the bolt and drew the lattice towards him.

It was a calm, clear night: one could see the whole shore. He looked for Campana's grave. Two dogs scratching the sand showed him the spot.

The king shut the window violently, and without undressing threw himself onto his bed. At last, fearing that his agitation would be attributed to personal alarm, he undressed and went to bed, to sleep, or seem to sleep all night.

On the morning of the 9th the tailors whom Murat had asked for arrived. He ordered a great many clothes, taking the trouble to explain all the details suggested by his fastidious taste. He was thus employed when General Nunziante came in. He listened sadly to the king's commands. He had just received telegraphic despatches ordering him to try the King of Naples by court-martial as a public enemy. But he found the king so confident, so tranquil, almost cheerful indeed, that he had not the heart to announce his trial to him, and took

upon himself to delay the opening of operations until he received written instructions. These arrived on the evening of the 12th. They were couched in the following terms:—

NAPLES, *October* 9, 1815

"Ferdinand, by the grace of God, etc. . . . wills and decrees the following:—

"Art. 1. General Murat is to be tried by court-martial, the members whereof are to be nominated by our Minister of War.

"Art. 2. Only half an hour is to be accorded to the condemned for the exercises of religion.

"(*Signed*) FERDINAND"

Another despatch from the minister contained the names of the members of the commission. They were:—

Giuseppe Fosculo, adjutant, commander-in-chief of the staff, president.

Laffaello Scalfaro, chief of the legion of Lower Calabria.

Latereo Natali, lieutenant-colonel of the Royal Marines.

Gennaro Lanzetta, lieutenant-colonel of the Engineers.

W. T., captain of Artillery.

François de Vengé, ditto.

Francesco Martellari, lieutenant of Artillery.

Francesco Froio, lieutenant in the 3rd regiment of the line.

Giovanni della Camera, Public Prosecutor to the Criminal Courts of Lower Calabria.

Francesco Papavassi, registrar.

The commission assembled that night.

On the 13th October, at six o'clock in the morning, Captain Stratti came into the king's prison; he was sound asleep. Stratti was going away again, when he stumbled against a chair; the noise awoke Murat.

"What do you want with me, captain?" asked the king.

Stratti tried to speak, but his voice failed him.

"Ah ha!" said Murat, "you must have had news from Naples."

"Yes, sire," muttered Stratti.

"What are they?" said Murat.

"Your trial, sire."

"And by whose order will sentence be pronounced, if you please? Where will they find peers to judge me? If they consider me as a king, I must have a tribunal of kings; if I am a marshal of France, I must have a court of marshals; if I am a general, and that is the least I can be, I must have a jury of generals."

"Sire, you are declared a public enemy, and as such you are liable to be judged by court-martial: it is the law which you instituted yourself for rebels."

"That law was made for brigands, and not for crowned heads, sir," said Murat scornfully. "I am ready; let them butcher me if they like. I did not think King Ferdinand capable of such an action."

"Sire, will you not hear the names of your judges?"

"Yes, sir, I will. It must be a curious list. Read it: I am listening."

Captain Stratti read out the names that we have enumerated. Murat listened with a disdainful smile.

"Ah," he said, as the captain finished, "it seems that every precaution has been taken."

"How, sire?"

"Yes. Don't you know that all these men, with the exception of Francesco Froio, the reporter, owe their promotion to me? They will be afraid of being accused of sparing me out of gratitude, and save one voice, perhaps, the sentence will be unanimous."

"Sire, suppose you were to appear before the court, to plead your own cause?"

"Silence, sir, silence!" said Murat. "I could not officially recognise the judges you have named without tearing too many pages of history. Such

a tribunal is quite incompetent; I should be disgraced if I appeared before it. I know I could not save my life, let me at least preserve my royal dignity."

At this moment Lieutenant Francesco Froio came in to interrogate the prisoner, asking his name, his age, and his nationality. Hearing these questions, Murat rose with an expression of sublime dignity.

"I am Joachim Napoleon, King of the Two Sicilies," he answered, "and I order you to leave me."

The registrar obeyed.

Then Murat partially dressed himself, and asked Stratti if he could write a farewell to his wife and children. The Captain no longer able to speak, answered by an affirmative sign; then Joachim sat down to the table and wrote this letter:—

[1] "DEAR CAROLINE OF MY HEART,—The fatal moment has come: I am to suffer the death penalty. In an hour you will be a widow, our children will be fatherless: remember me; never forget my memory. I die innocent; my life is taken from me unjustly.

"Good-bye, Achille; good-bye, Laetitia; good-bye, Lucien; good-bye, Louise.

"Show yourselves worthy of me; I leave you in

[1] We can guarantee the authenticity of this letter, having copied it ourselves at Pizzo, from the Cavaliere Alcala's copy of the original.

a world and in a kingdom full of my enemies. Show yourselves superior to adversity, and remember never to think yourselves better than you are, remembering what you have been.

"Farewell. I bless you all. Never curse my memory. Remember that the worst pang of my agony is in dying far from my children, far from my wife, without a friend to close my eyes. Farewell, my own Caroline. Farewell, my children. I send you my blessing, my most tender tears, my last kisses. Farewell, farewell. Never forget your unhappy father, JOACHIM MURAT

"PIZZO, *Oct.* 13, 1815"

Then he cut off a lock of his hair and put it in his letter. Just then General Nunziante came in; Murat went to him and held out his hand.

"General," he said, "you are a father, you are a husband, one day you will know what it is to part from your wife and sons. Swear to me that this letter shall be delivered."

"On my epaulettes," said the general,[1] wiping his eyes.

"Come, come, courage, general," said Murat; "we are soldiers, we know how to face death. One favour—you will let me give the order to fire, will you not?"

[1] Madame Murat never received this letter.

The general signed acquiescence: just then the registrar came in with the king's sentence in his hand.

Murat guessed what it was.

"Read, sir," he said coldly; "I am listening."

The registrar obeyed. Murat was right.

The sentence of death had been carried with only one dissentient voice.

When the reading was finished, the king turned again to Nunziante.

"General," he said, "believe that I distinguish in my mind the instrument which strikes me and the hand that wields that instrument. I should never have thought that Ferdinand would have had me shot like a dog; he does not hesitate apparently before such infamy. Very well. We will say no more about it. I have challenged my judges, but not my executioners. What time have you fixed for my execution?"

"Will you fix it yourself, sir?" said the general.

Murat pulled out a watch on which there was a portrait of his wife; by chance he turned up the portrait, and not the face of the watch; he gazed at it tenderly.

"See, general," he said, showing it to Nunziante; "it is a portrait of the queen. You know her; is it not like her?"

The general turned away his head. Murat sighed and put away the watch.

"Well, sire," said the registrar, "what time have you fixed?"

"Ah yes," said Murat, smiling, "I forgot why I took out my watch when I saw Caroline's portrait."

Then he looked at his watch again, but this time at its face.

"Well, it shall be at four o'clock, if you like; it is past three o'clock. I ask for fifty minutes. Is that too much, sir?"

The registrar bowed and went out. The general was about to follow him.

"Shall I never see you again, Nunziante?" said Murat.

"My orders are to be present at your death, sire, but I cannot do it."

"Very well, general. I will dispense with your presence at the last moment, but I should like to say farewell once more and to embrace you."

"I will be near, sire."

"Thank you. Now leave me alone."

"Sire, there are two priests here."

Murat made an impatient movement.

"Will you receive them?" continued the general.

"Yes; bring them in."

The general went out. A moment later, two

priests appeared in the doorway. One of them was called Francesco Pellegrino, uncle of the man who had caused the king's death; the other was Don Antonio Masdea.

"What do you want here?" asked Murat.

"We come to ask you if you are dying a Christian?"

"I am dying as a soldier. Leave me."

Don Francesco Pellegrino retired. No doubt he felt ill at ease before Joachim. But Antonio Masdea remained at the door.

"Did you not hear me?" asked the king.

"Yes, indeed," answered the old man; "but permit me, sire, to hope that it was not your last word to me. It is not the first time that I see you or beg something of you. I have already had occasion to ask a favour of you."

"What was that?"

"When your Majesty came to Pizzo in 1810, I asked you for 25,000 francs to enable us to finish our church. Your Majesty sent me 40,000 francs."

"I must have foreseen that I should be buried there," said Murat, smiling.

"Ah, sire, I should like to think that you did not refuse my second boon any more than my first. Sire, I entreat you on my knees."

The old man fell at Murat's feet.

"Die as a Christian!"

"That would give you pleasure, then, would it?" said the king.

"Sire, I would give the few short days remaining to me if God would grant that His Holy Spirit should fall upon you in your last hour."

"Well," said Murat, "hear my confession. I accuse myself of having been disobedient to my parents as a child. Since I reached manhood I have done nothing to reproach myself with."

"Sire, will you give me an attestation that you die in the Christian faith?"

"Certainly," said Murat.

And he took a pen and wrote: "I, Joachim Murat, die a Christian, believing in the Holy Catholic Church, Apostolic and Roman."

He signed it.

"Now, father," continued the king, "if you have a third favour to ask of me, make haste, for in half an hour it will be too late."

Indeed, the castle clock was striking half-past three. The priest signed that he had finished.

"Then leave me alone," said Murat; and the old man went out.

Murat paced his room for a few moments, then he sat down on his bed and let his head fall into his hands. Doubtless, during the quarter of an hour he remained thus absorbed in his thoughts, he saw his whole life pass before him, from the inn where

he had started to the palace he had reached; no doubt his adventurous career unrolled itself before him like some golden dream, some brilliant fiction, some tale from the *Arabian Nights*.

His life gleamed athwart the storm like a rainbow, and like a rainbow's, its two extremities were lost in clouds—the clouds of birth and death. At last he roused himself from this inward contemplation, and lifted a pale but tranquil face. Then he went to the glass and arranged his hair. His strange characteristics never left him. The affianced of Death, he was adorning himself to meet his bride.

Four o'clock struck.

Murat went to the door himself and opened it.

General Nunziante was waiting for him.

"Thank you, general," said Murat. "You have kept your word. Kiss me, and go at once, if you like."

The general threw himself into the king's arms, weeping, and utterly unable to speak.

"Courage," said Murat. "You see *I* am calm." It was this very calmness which broke the general's heart. He dashed out of the corridor, and left the castle, running like a madman.

Then the king walked out into the courtyard.

Everything was ready for the execution.

Nine men and a corporal were ranged before the door of the council chamber. Opposite them was a

wall twelve feet high. Three feet away from the wall was a stone block: Murat mounted it, thus raising himself about a foot above the soldiers who were to execute him. Then he took out his watch, kissed his wife's portrait, and fixing his eyes on it, gave the order to fire. At the word of command five out of the nine men fired: Murat remained standing. The soldiers had been ashamed to fire on their king, and had aimed over his head. That moment perhaps displayed most gloriously the lion-like courage which was Murat's special attribute. His face never changed, he did not move a muscle; only gazing at the soldiers with an expression of mingled bitterness and gratitude, he said—

"Thank you, my friends. Since sooner or later you will be obliged to aim true, do not prolong my death-agonies. All I ask you is to aim at the heart and spare the face. Now——"

With the same voice, the same calm, the same expression, he repeated the fatal words one after another, without lagging, without hastening, as if he were giving an accustomed command; but this time, happier than the first, at the word "Fire!" he fell pierced by eight bullets, without a sigh, without a movement, still holding the watch[1] in his left hand.

The soldiers took up the body and laid it on the

[1] Madame Murat recovered this watch at the price of 200 louis.

bed where ten minutes before he had been sitting, and the captain put a guard at the door.

In the evening a man presented himself, asking to go into the death-chamber: the sentinel refused to let him in, and he demanded an interview with the governor of the prison. Led before him, he produced an order. The commander read it with surprise and disgust, but after reading it he led the man to the door where he had been refused entrance.

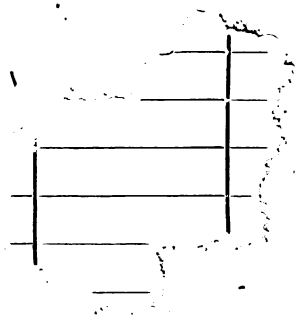
"Pass the Signor Luidgi," he said to the sentinel.

Ten minutes had hardly elapsed before he came out again, holding a bloodstained handkerchief containing something to which the sentinel could not give a name.

An hour later, the carpenter brought the coffin which was to contain the king's remains. The workman entered the room, but instantly called the sentinel in a voice of indescribable terror.

The sentinel half opened the door to see what had caused the man's panic.

The carpenter pointed to a headless corpse!

At the death of King Ferdinand, that head, preserved in spirits of wine, was found in a secret cupboard in his bedroom.

A week after the execution of Pizzo everyone had received his reward: Trenta Capelli was made a colonel, General Nunziante a marquis, and Luidgi died from the effects of poison.